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THE  
SPIRIT OF POPERY:

AN EXPOSURE

OF

ITS ORIGIN, CHARACTER, AND RESULTS.

IN LETTERS

FROM

A FATHER TO HIS CHILDREN.

LONDON:

THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY;

*Instituted 1799.*

SOLD AT THE DEPOSITORY, 56, PATERNOSTER ROW, AND 65, ST. PAUL'S  
CHURCHYARD; AND BY THE BOOKSELLERS.

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1840.

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1840

WILLIAM TYLER,

PRINTER,

5, BOLT COURT, FLEET STREET.

Entered

Western Ont. Univ. Library

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THE  
SPIRIT OF POPERY.

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LETTER I.

THE INTEREST OF A PARENT IN HIS CHILDREN'S WELFARE—THE  
SOUL OF CHIEF IMPORTANCE—TRUE RELIGION IS PERSONAL—  
POPERY AND PAGANISM—NECESSITY OF CAUTION—THE CLAIMS  
OF OTHERS.

IN commencing this series of letters to you, my dear children, I cannot but renew the expression of the most affectionate solicitude for your real welfare. It is only a parent that can know a parent's heart. The words of my pen will therefore serve to recall and enforce many to which you have already listened. Let them all be held in remembrance. For whatever concerns you—the state of your health, your acquisition of knowledge, and your prospects in society, awaken in my bosom emotions of the liveliest and tenderest interest—emotions to which you must be strangers, until

you sustain to others, should such be the will of God, the endeared relation which I bear towards you.

To the object of my chief, my increasing anxiety for your welfare, you are no strangers. You have been taught that the body is only like an earthly casket, containing a jewel of inestimable worth—that though a drop bears some comparison to all the waters of the globe, there is none between the present life and that which is to come—and that our bounden duty is connected with our highest happiness, in acceptance before God through “the Beloved” now, and in consequent preparation for the glory and blessedness of heaven. Infinitely rather would I that such a state were yours, than that you could call the treasures of a world your own. These, though possessed, must all be left, after many afflicting proofs of their emptiness and vanity, at the brink of the grave ; but to the heir of a glorious immortality is secured, even here, all that is truly valuable. He foregoes only what would injure him, to be enriched for ever by the munificence of God. Well then might Solomon say : “ Wisdom is the principal thing ; therefore get wisdom : and with all thy getting get understanding.”—Well might the great apostle of the Gentiles declare that “ godliness with contentment is great gain.”

Here, however, let one truth be particularly observed

—religion, true religion, is a personal thing. In many cases a proxy is admissible, but here it is not : no one can become pious for us ; a substitution of others for ourselves is utterly impossible. Religion is often exhibited in the Scriptures as knowledge, affection, and obedience ; and these are obviously not relative, but individual ; equally certain, therefore, is it that religion must be personal also. It is, in fact, “ a heart of flesh,” a renewal in the spirit of the mind, a new nature, a Divine principle, the life of God in the soul of man—a life kindled from above, and rising to the world from whence it came. Not only does true piety operate on the individual, as considered apart from others, but it acts on the whole man. In his understanding, it is light ; in his affections, it is love ; in his conscience, it is submission to supreme authority ; throughout his course, it is habitual conformity to the law of righteousness.

To prevent your being a decided follower of Christ, and professing his religion, is the chief design of the great adversary of man. Like a subtle fowler, he sets his snares around you ; he has placed many for the capture of our race in all ages, and there are others which he peculiarly adapts to the present times. To one, which peculiarly displays his subtilty, I now wish to direct your utmost attention.

When Bunyan, one of your favourite authors, was describing the progress of the Pilgrim, he tells us that Christian came in the light of the sun to the end of the valley of the shadow of death. "Now, I saw in my dream," he continues, "that at the end of the valley lay blood, bones, ashes, and mangled bodies of men, even of pilgrims that had gone this way formerly ; and while I was musing what should be the reason, I espied a little before me a cave, where two giants, Pope and Pagan, dwelt in old times, by whose power and tyranny the men, whose bones, blood, and ashes lay there, were cruelly put to death. But by this place Christian went without much danger, whereat I somewhat wondered ; but I have learned since, that Pagan has been dead many a day ; and as for the other, though he be yet alive, he is, by reason of age, and also of the many shrewd brushes that he met with in his younger days, grown so crazy and stiff in his joints, that he can now do little more than sit in his cave's mouth, grinning at pilgrims as they go by, and biting his nails because he cannot come at them."

This vivid description will not, however, apply to the present day, when Popery is again displaying full life and activity. In France, it seemed not many years ago to be utterly destroyed, but it has been again

set up, has rapidly gained ground, and now makes every effort again to become the only religion of the land. The number of young men preparing for the service of the Romish church in that country increases. The churches of Paris are well filled, often crowded. The statues, paintings, crosses, candlesticks, artificial flowers, and all the rest of the internal garniture of these idol temples, have been lately refitted and put in perfect order. The old churches are being repaired, and new ones built throughout France. Of all this the late archbishop of Paris appears to have been a principal instrument—a man whose life was marked by what is ordinarily called virtue, but whose bondage to the superstitions of his church was abject and complete. Thus he became a most efficient instrument to carry forward the revival of Popery.

In Ireland there are said to be 7,000,000 of Papists ; and in England, the churches of these people are greatly on the increase. We hear occasionally of young females entering convents, but this is done very frequently without exciting public attention ; while the education of young men for the service of the Romish church is zealous and unceasing. The total number of the population of the globe within its pale, may be estimated at about 120 or 130 millions.

Of the enormous evils thus widely prevalent, it is important that you should be fully aware, especially as many of its errors are broached under the appellation of the ancient faith, and in some respects frequently pass for Protestantism ; while some doctrines falsely assumed to be those of Protestants are, in fact, Popery. A venomous reptile is the more dangerous when a name is assigned to it which lulls suspicion. We should dread and shun evil in every guise, though it should appear as only an atom, as well as in its most alarming aspect and aggregate. Truth and righteousness are not matters of quantity, but of principle. " He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much ; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much." The irrevocable charge is : " Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."—" Abstain from all appearance of evil."

That these Divine precepts may be practically and constantly regarded by you, is my daily and hourly prayer. Error—fearful error, in the garb of truth, with a bland and benignant demeanour, and words soft as the snow which falls as I write, will address you, and aim to take you captive. To be forewarned is to be forearmed. Apprized of the character and designs of one who appears as " an angel of light," you may de-

tect the god of this world through his disguise, and “stand in the evil day,” through the strength of the Almighty, while others are ensnared by his wiles.

Nor should this be all ; it is not enough for us to ask with Cain, “Am I my brother’s keeper ?” We are required by that law which demands a supreme love for God, to love our neighbour as ourselves. To use our best endeavours that others may be prevented from falling into error, or delivered from it, is therefore matter of solemn obligation. From this there can be no release until death. Here then is another reason for the appeal I now make. I am deeply concerned that you should manifest your devout regard to both tables of the law of God—that piety should be clearly associated in your case with philanthropy—and that yours should not only be the honour and the happiness of a sincere discipleship, but also of turning others to righteousness, though you should occupy only a private sphere. Thus have I opened to you my general design ; may He who has said, “I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring, and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses,” graciously afford us his direction and blessing.



## LETTER II.

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EARLY CORRUPTION OF CHRISTIANITY—THE MAN OF SIN—CIVIL  
AND ECCLESIASTICAL SUPREMACY ASSUMED BY THE POPE—FUL-  
FILMENT OF PROPHECY—ITS EVIDENCE OF DIVINE INSPIRATION.

IT is necessary, my dear children, in the accomplishment of my present design, that you should have at the outset, a sketch of the rise and progress of Popery, in order to remove many difficulties lying in our path. This, therefore, I now proceed to supply, premising only that brevity is necessary, and that by and by you will do well to avail yourselves of more copious sources of information.

Here, then, let it be remarked, that heaven is the only state of absolute perfection. All things on earth are exposed to corruption. Man is a depraved creature, and until renewed by the work of the Holy Spirit, he contaminates every thing with which he has to do. Hence, the material “heavens shall pass away with a



great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up," 2 Peter iii. 10.

The same tendency of human nature will appear from a still more lamentable fact. At a time appointed by Infinite Wisdom, the holy, benignant, and elevating system of Christianity was granted to our race. It came to this world in perfect purity; yet as the mountain torrent, gushing forth in all its clearness and brightness from the towering eminence, may contract defilement as it passes along the swamp beneath, so Christianity suffered in its progress from human depravity. Look at it in its advent, and observe the glory it casts on its Divine Author; look at it in after ages, and you will have abundant cause to bewail the guilt and misery of man.

The Jews engaged in this work of corruption. Though free from idolatry after the Babylonish captivity, their belief was polluted by the fables and traditions of men; and as from their own wilfulness, the new dispensation failed to inspire them with its divine principles, and to mould them according to its own lovely image, they brought it down from its noble elevation, and impressed on it human infirmity and error. Though strongly attached in appearance to the Mosaic system, the form

only remained—it was a corpse from which the living spirit had fled ; for the doctrines given by inspiration of God were concealed by a mass of vain interpretations. The direct opposition between their favourite tenets and the will of Heaven, as declared by those who were taught from above, they did not deny ; yet such is the fascination of prejudice, and so strangely does it darken even the plainest truths, that they resolved to reject all that they were unwilling to embrace, and to have recourse to forged or interpolated documents, to secure the credence of their followers where they might otherwise have hesitated to believe.

Supposing, then, that you see Christianity at its rise like the pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, numerous beyond description were the means of its corruption. Peculiarities of natural temperament, the efforts of unbridled imagination, the weakness of excessive sensibility, the power of disease, the indolence that will not be roused, the credulity which grasps any object, regardless of its character, or the basis on which it rests, the prejudice which, come what will, deprecates every change, the vanity which ever thirsts for human applause, the pride whose only aim is personal aggrandizement, and the presumption that rushes in where angels fear to tread—all contributed to impair the integrity of Christian

truth, and corrupt the simplicity of Christian institutes.

It would be easy to cite many facts in proof of the awful degeneracy that was apparent ; but I will refer you to only one. Look at Jesus, the eternal Son of God, who after supping with his disciples, laid aside his outer garment, and having girded himself with a towel, proceeded, in the usual attitude of a servant or a slave, to wash their feet, and enjoin on them humility and mutual love—yes, with the gracious Redeemer fully in view, I would ask you to visit the banqueting chamber of the emperor Maximus, when surrounded by a splendid circle of illustrious guests. Near to the monarch is another striking figure ; it is that of Martin, bishop of Tours ; and one of his presbyters is seated between the brother and uncle of the sovereign. An attendant, according to the usual custom, presents a chalice of wine to the emperor, who commands it to be offered first to the bishop, that he may receive it from the prelate's hands ; but no sooner has Martin drank, than he passes the wine to his presbyter, as next in importance to himself ; while the empress bathes his feet with her tears, wipes them with the hair of her head, attends as a slave to every means of indulgence, and regards the crumbs of his meal as the richest delicacy. Is it supposed that this is

homage of a recent date? It was tendered at the distance of only three or four lives from the apostle John ! Thus early had the nominal followers of Christ departed from Christian simplicity.

No wonder, then, that in the third century, Cyprian, the bishop of Carthage, could thus describe the existing state of the Christian church : “ Long peace had corrupted the discipline divinely revealed to us. Each was intent on improving his patrimony, and had forgotten what believers had done under the apostles, and what they ought always to do. They were brooding over the arts of amassing wealth ; works of mercy were neglected, and discipline was at the lowest ebb. Luxury and effeminacy prevailed ; meretricious arts of dress were practised among the brethren. Christians could unite themselves in matrimony with unbelievers ; could swear, not only without reverence, but without veracity. Many bishops, neglecting the peculiar duties of their stations, gave themselves up to secular pursuits. They deserted their places of residence, and their flocks. They travelled through distant provinces, in quest of pleasure and gain ; gave no assistance to their needy brethren, but were insatiable in their thirst of money. They possessed estates by fraud, and multiplied usury.”

In this portraiture appear prominent the features of

the "man of sin," as described by the apostle, long before his complete development. It was said, "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped," 2 Thess. ii. 4; and in the papal usurpation, this part of the prophecy is exactly fulfilled. The term "gods" is frequently applied in the Old Testament to kings and magistrates, and the word translated "that is worshipped," is often used for the veneration and homage paid to monarchs, and particularly to the Roman emperors; and here we trace the assumption of civil dominion by the pope. For as the Roman empire was hastening to its decline, the seat of government was transferred to Byzantium, since called Constantinople, thus securing to the Roman pontiff, a great increase of power. While new and successive kingdoms arose, after the irruptions of the Goths and Vandals, who destroyed the Roman empire in the west, the new court gradually augmented its strength, till its ambitious head was in full possession of civil as well as ecclesiastical supremacy. The haughty prelate reminds us of Satan, when he offered the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, as the reward of his worship. Men were raised from private life to sceptres, and even thrones, at his dictation. Monarchs and emperors received their titles from the pope, and were deposed at

his pleasure. The kings of the earth "gave their power and strength to the beast," Rev. xvii. 13.

Abject indeed was their consequent degradation. It was no unusual thing for the Roman pontiff to tread on the necks of emperors, to kick off their crowns with his foot, and to oblige them to hold his stirrup when he mounted his horse. Philip iv. of France led pope Clement's horse on his return from the church where he had been crowned; and you will remember that king John of England also felt his power, when he laid this country under an interdict. The nation was, in consequence, stripped of all appearance of what was called religious service. The use of flesh meat was forbidden, as in Lent; no entertainments were allowed; the people were not suffered to salute each other, or to give any decent attention to the person or apparel. Every where great distress prevailed. There was also a sentence directed against individuals, called excommunication. Any one on whom it passed was considered as polluted; and, with some few exceptions, all persons were forbidden to approach or aid him. The English king John was thus excommunicated by the pope, who also published a sort of crusade, exhorting all Christian barons to attack and dethrone him.

While this sentence was gradually revoked, the in-



terdict was upheld ; and it was declared to be the pope's intention that it should be so, until certain claims he advanced were fully adjusted. These were afterwards settled by the payment of 40,000 marks ; and after the interdict was taken off, John renewed with great solemnity, and by a new charter, sealed with gold, his professions of homage to the see of Rome.

Civil supremacy was not however enough, and hence it was announced that the "man of sin" should assume that which was ecclesiastical, and even Divine prerogatives. The apostle says, "He as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God," 2 Thess. ii. 4. No prediction can be more completely fulfilled than this in the instance of the Roman pontiff, for his supremacy is a fundamental article of his church, on which depend its asserted infallibility and exclusive authority. Here is the very key-stone of the arch of its power, which removed, would leave the whole fabric of the earthly power it assumes to fall into ruin. In himself, therefore, the pope appears as the fountain of civil and ecclesiastical power. He claims an homage which even rivals that of Jehovah. Some of the titles he assumes are truly awful. Among them are, "Most holy Lord," "God upon earth," "Our Lord God the pope!" I quote these from Romish authors.

Of this enormous wickedness, the apostle John had an intimation in the visions of the Apocalypse. "I stood," he says, "upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven," Rev. xiii. 1, 5—7. "And I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns: and upon her forehead was a name written, *Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth*," Rev. xvii. 3, 5.

Here then is one proof, that "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," 2 Pet. i. 21. How clearly is the Romish church exhibited by the woman, and the papal power by the beast! Indeed Dr. Clarke, the friend of Newton, and one of the most able reasoners our country ever produced, says he would feel no hesitation in putting the truth of revealed religion entirely upon the reality of that prophetic spirit which foretold the "man of sin," and the desolation of Christ's church and kingdom by antichrist. "If," says



he, after enumerating some predictions, "if in the days of St. Paul and St. John, there were any footsteps of such a sort of power as this in the world : or if there ever had been such power in the world : or if there was then any appearance of probability that could make it enter into the heart of man to imagine that there ever could be any such kind of power in the world, much less in the temple or church of God ; and, if there be not now such a power actually and conspicuously exercised in the world ; and if any picture of this power, drawn after the event, can describe it more plainly and exactly than it was originally described in the words of the prophecy ; then may it with some degree of plausibleness be suggested, that the prophecies are nothing more than enthusiastic inventions."

It has been justly observed, that to an eye-witness, one single and unquestionable miracle would be a decisive proof of a Divine agency—a convincing evidence of a Divine commission. With equal justice may it be affirmed, that one single prophecy, given long before the event, agreeing in every particular with it, and removed far beyond the power of human foresight, must become an unquestionable proof of Divine prescience and inspiration. What then must the force of the argument be, when we compare the various parts of the system of

prophecy with the records of past ages and the course of present events ! If but one column of the building be so firm and enduring, what must be the solidity of the entire structure, which rests on innumerable supports !

The pen of history has recorded the results of the civil and ecclesiastical power, which has now been briefly traced from its rise to its entire dominion. It presents in an impressive light the inspired saying, " Evil men and seducers wax worse and worse." For successive ages only added to the mass of existing error, and its pestilential influence pervaded every class of the community. The clergy, generally speaking, were sunk in gross sensuality, and all the avenues by which truth could enter the mind, were guarded with the utmost care. It was as if a mental paralysis had seized on the people ; the common light of the understanding was quenched ; learning was branded as the source of heresy ; and ignorance declared to be the mother of devotion.

The moral degeneracy thus continued and increased, was promoted by the various means employed for the accumulation of wealth. The benefices of the church were sold to laymen, and even to children ; and afterwards let to under-tenants, who did not perform the services for which they were paid, but spent their lives

in efforts to reimburse themselves at the expense of the flock. The fleece was their only care, not the sheep; these were left to perish without pasture.

The chief object now contemplated by Popery, was the provision of an ample and permanent revenue, to support its usurpations and outward ceremonials. Kings and people were alike laid under tribute; and art, fraud, and intimidation were employed, that the treasures of Christendom might flow into the exchequer of Rome. Ecclesiastical taxes were levied; pardons, benefices, honours, and prayers for the living and the dead, became articles of merchandize; and new terms of bargain and sale were constantly invented, that the wealth of the world might be transferred to the coffers of the church. Almost incredible was the amount that rewarded this subtle, yet nefarious scheme, and hence Pope Leo x. said, "Oh, how profitable has this fable of Jesus been to us!" As we look on, however, we cannot fail to hear another voice saying, "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days," James v. 13.

Meanwhile there were subtle means in operation to prevent and lull all suspicion. The doctrine that the Roman church is infallible, is the very acmé of its ingenuity ; forbidding, as it does, every exception to its course, and casting over it, whatever it may be, an air of sanctity. This, therefore, was zealously promulgated. As it rears an impregnable defence around the past, so it provides another for the future. To suppose that the church had erred, would prepare for the suspicion that it might still err ; but the imagination that error is absolutely impossible, secures alike the supremacy of the church and the prostration of the soul. In this authority over conscience there was an inlet to every enormity. Punishment was to be suffered as the consequence of disobedience. The bishops of Rome, unable to carry their persecuting edicts into force beyond their temporal domains, urged on princes and magistrates the imperative duty of punishing and suppressing all heretics, against whom their anathemas were uttered. Strangely affecting a horror of blood, they committed to the temporal authorities of each state the office of executioner. Nor was it an easy task for the civil power to keep pace with the fury of the ecclesiastical. Though John Huss, the reformer of Bohemia, had received what is called “ a safe con-

duct" from the emperor Sigismund—a royal guarantee, in fact, for his personal safety—yet because he would not abjure the truth, the council of Constance, convened by order of the pope, composed of delegates from every kingdom and country of Europe, held in the presence of an emperor and many other sovereign princes, yes, this council decided that the "safe conduct" ought not to impede the decision of the ecclesiastical judge, and according to this decree, the reformer was arrested, cast into prison, and suffered at Constance a public martyrdom!

But to evil there is a time. For a long period, heretics, as they were called, were cut off, and the nominally Christian world supinely acquiesced in the absurdities inculcated, the errors maintained, and the cruelties committed. The means of opposition were, however, rising, and greatly on the increase. Much is owing, under God, to the exertions of Wycliffe. A controversy he maintained with one class of Romanists, the begging friars, in 1360, may be considered as the beginning of the first English reformation; and this, together with his translation of the Scriptures into the yet unformed language of the common people of our land, are facts worthy of our grateful remembrance.

It is true, that the brightness of this morning star

was followed by a gloom which seemed to threaten the return of night ; but all the great principles afterwards established, are to be found in the writings of the first English reformer. According to historians, the books of Wycliffe, being carried into Bohemia by Peter Payne, an Englishman, and one of his disciples, spread there so far in a little time, that the greatest part of the masters and scholars of the University of Prague had got them into their hands, when John Huss was in that very seat of learning a master of arts and bachelor of divinity.

Lutterworth, in Leicestershire, was the scene of Wycliffe's labours. He was buried in the chancel of that church ; but, forty years after, his remains were taken up and burned, and his ashes scattered on the Swift, a small neighbouring river, by order of the reigning pope. The chasibule, or outer garment which he wore as a priest, is still preserved ; his chair, and the roughly carved pulpit in which he preached the word of everlasting life, may also be seen.

With this illustrious man, another, still more distinguished, must be associated. Martin Luther, born in the electorate of Saxony, discovered a Bible in the Latin tongue, in the library of the Augustinian monastery at Erfurt : the light of Heaven, in consequence, broke gradually on his mind ; he deplored the errors in which

he and multitudes were immersed, and, in 1517, he commenced his noble and indefatigable labours for their exposure and correction.

The sale of indulgences especially roused this reformer's indignation. That this traffic may be understood, it should be observed, that, according to the doctrine of the Romish church, all the good works of the saints, over and above those which are necessary to their own justification, are deposited together with the infinite merits of Christ, in one inexhaustible treasury. Using figurative language, the keys of this store-house are said to be committed to Peter and his successors, the popes, who may open it at pleasure ; and by transferring a portion of this superabundant merit for a sum of money, may convey to any person, either the pardon of his own sins, or a release for any one in whom he is interested, from the pains of purgatory ; a state in which those who depart out of this life are said to suffer severe pain and punishment, in order to expiate offences which are considered venial, or which being mortal and heinous sins, have not been fully expiated or pardoned in this life.

Such indulgences were first offered in the eleventh century, by pope Urban II., as a recompence for those who personally went to rescue the Holy Land from the



power of the Saracens. They were afterwards granted to any one who hired a soldier for this enterprize ; and, in the course of time, they were bestowed on all who gave money to accomplish works enjoined by the pope. Thus, Leo x., in order to carry on the magnificent structure of St. Peter's, at Rome, offered indulgences and a full remission to all contributors to that edifice. As the project succeeded, he granted to Albert, the elector of Mentz, and archbishop of Magdeburg, the benefit of the indulgences of Saxony and the neighbouring parts, and farmed out those of other countries to the highest bidders ; who, to secure the largest profits, employed the ablest preachers to recommend and urge their purchase.

The language in which they made these offers was almost incredibly extravagant. Only, said they, let a man purchase letters of indulgence, and the salvation of his soul is secured. Only let him obtain them for others in purgatory, and as soon as the money tinkles in the chest, their spirits escape from the place of torment, and ascend into heaven. It was affirmed, that the most heinous sins might thus be remitted ; and that the cross erected by these preachers was as efficacious as the cross of Christ. “ Lo,” these preachers exclaimed, “ the heavens are open ; if you advance not now, when



will you enter? For twelve pence you may redeem the soul of your father out of purgatory ; and are you so ungrateful that you will not deliver his spirit from torment? If you had but one coat, you ought to strip yourself instantly, sell your garment, and obtain the benefit."

The opposition of such statements to the word of God will be at once apparent ; but with this, as we shall see, Popery maintains a continual conflict. And here it may be observed, that the terms Papist and Romanist, so generally employed in the following letters, are not used in any invidious sense, but because every reflecting mind must have a strong objection to the phrases Catholic and Roman Catholic, as applied to the parties concerned. The word *Catholic* is inapplicable, because it means "universal," and there is but one universal church, which is formed of the whole body of believers on earth and in heaven. This explains why the Papist or Romanist insidiously endeavours to appropriate that word to his church, which, after all, does not include more than a tenth part of the human race, even as outwardly professing its doctrines. The usurpation of the term is still more objectionable when we consider that the church of Rome is the most intolerant of all ; and equally so is the phrase *Roman Catholic*, because

that church was never universal in any sense whatever ; and the addition of the word *Roman* expressly implies that it is *not* Catholic, that is, *not* universal.

Here then this letter may be concluded, by adding for your information the creed of Pope Pius iv., containing what every member of the church of Rome professedly believes.

“ I, N, believe and profess with a firm faith, all and every thing contained in the symbol of faith which the holy Roman church uses ; namely, I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth,” etc. to the end of what we call the Nicene Creed, after which immediately follow the additional articles in these words :—“ The apostolical and ecclesiastical traditions, and the rest of the observances and appointments of the same church, I most freely admit and embrace. I also receive the Holy Scripture according to that sense which the holy mother church (to whom it belongs to judge of the true sense) hath held and doth hold ; nor will I ever understand and interpret it, otherwise than according to the unanimous consent of the fathers. I profess also that there are truly and properly seven sacraments of the new law, instituted by Jesus Christ our Lord, and necessary to the salvation of mankind, though not all of them necessary to every

man, namely, baptism, confirmation, the eucharist, penance, extreme unction, orders, and matrimony, and that they confer grace; and that of these, baptism, confirmation, and orders, cannot be repeated without sacrilege.

“I likewise receive and admit all the received and approved rites of the catholic church, in the solemn administration of all the above-mentioned sacraments.

“All and every thing, which was defined and declared about original sin, and justification, by the most holy council of Trent, I embrace and receive.

“I profess likewise, that, in the mass, is offered to God a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead; and that in the most holy sacrament of the eucharist, there is truly, really, and substantially the body and blood, together with the soul and Divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that there is a conversion made of the whole substance of bread into his body, and of the whole substance of wine into his blood; which conversion the catholic church calls Transubstantiation.

“I confess, also, that under either species only, a whole and entire Christ, and the true sacrament is received.

“I constantly hold that there is a purgatory; and

that the souls there detained are helped by the suffrages of the faithful.

“As also, that the saints who reign together with Christ, are to be worshipped and invoked; and that they offer prayers to God for us; and that their relics are to be venerated.

“I most firmly assert, that the images of Christ, and the mother of God, the always virgin, as also of other saints, are to be had and retained, and due honour and veneration to be bestowed on them.

“I affirm also, that the power of indulgences was left by Christ in his church, and that their use is most wholesome to a Christian people.

“I acknowledge the holy catholic and apostolic *Roman* Church to be the mother and mistress of all churches, and I promise and swear true obedience to the bishop of Rome, successor of St. Peter, the prince of apostles, and vicar of Jesus Christ.

“All the rest also delivered, defined, and declared by the sacred canons, and ecumenical councils, especially by the most holy synod of Trent, I receive and profess without doubt; and likewise all things contrary, and whatsoever heresies, condemned, rejected, and anathematized by the church, I, in like manner, condemn, reject, and anathematize.

“ This true catholic faith, without which no man can be saved, which at present I freely profess, and truly hold, I will most constantly retain and confess entire and inviolable (by the help of God) to my last breath ; and will take care, as much as in me lies, that it be held, taught, and preached by my subjects, or those who are subjected to me, or under my care, by any authority, in discharge of my duty.

“ I, the aforesaid N, promise, vow, and swear ; So help me God, and these Holy Gospels.”

Now, without more than a passing glance at this insidious production, it will be found to contain nearly twenty additions to a Christian's creed, without the reception of which salvation is pronounced impossible, and which yet were utterly unknown to our Lord and his apostles ! This we shall see more clearly when these articles of a Papist's faith come under separate examination ; meanwhile it may be remarked, that were such an adding to the things written in the lively oracles of God allowable, no limit could be placed to their augmentation, and the result would be, that which is so palpable in Popery, the setting aside of Divine revelation for the vain imaginations of men—the most guilty and perilous effort of human presumption.

## LETTER III.

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CLAIMS OF ORAL TRADITION EXAMINED—WRITINGS OF THE  
FATHERS—THE SCRIPTURES THE ONLY INFALLIBLE GUIDE.

WE have now taken our place in the midst of two conflicting parties; one formed of Papists, who affirm that their system is identical with apostolical Christianity; the other of Protestants, who contend that it is not. The ground chosen by them respectively in this controversy is of considerable extent; we must, therefore, traverse it gradually, confining our attention to a single point at a time, till we have accomplished our present object. The one to which we have now to attend, is that of oral tradition, which is the basis of a large part of the popish system.

That you may form a clear idea of what is meant by the terms just used, let it be observed, that Papists assume that the apostles delivered to the primitive Christians various unwritten instructions, that these have been preserved from generation to generation

by the Romish church, and that such traditions are equal in authority to the sacred writings. The reasoning they adopt is therefore obvious : “ We have authority for what you Protestants condemn in tradition, and, consequently, in apostolical instructions, from whence it is derived ;” and equally apparent is it, that we must show that there is no such authority, or accept the system which is founded on this basis.

Now, it is admitted that many things which Jesus said and did were not written, (John xxi. 25,) and that the apostles communicated a larger amount of truth to the churches they originated, than is included in the writings respectively addressed to them. The apostle Paul, for example, spent three years at Ephesus, and it is evident that he must have communicated orally much more than is contained in his epistle to that people. It is reasonable, therefore, to suppose that in early times, there were sayings of the apostles, as well as of Christ, which remained in the minds of many who had heard them, of which there is not, and never was a record. Still there are weighty reasons, which lead every thinking mind to conclude, that none of these were intended to be transmitted as authoritative, to succeeding generations. God would never have left any doctrine essential to man to the hazard of mere oral repetition, when, by his Holy



Spirit, the apostles were instructed to write to the churches.

It appears, indeed, in the highest degree improbable that the Divine will should have been committed to human tradition. The Pharisees assumed that they had such a mode of instruction; that Moses had communicated privately expositions of his law, and that these were transmitted orally from age to age. But did our Lord recognise their authority? On the contrary, he showed, in the most impressive manner, their absurdity, folly, and iniquity, saying, "Why do ye transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?" Matt. xv. 3. Is it likely, then, that he would give permanence among his disciples to a practice which he severely condemned as productive of enormous evils?

Again: consider the extreme uncertainty of such a mode of communication, as arising from the feebleness and errors of the human mind. There was no exemption from these in the times immediately following that of Christ, as is manifest from the statements of the early fathers. Even Clement, who was a fellow labourer of the apostle Paul, showed the influence of unrestrained imagination, when he attempted to prove that Rahab the harlot believed in the doctrine of the atonement, from her hanging a scarlet thread out of the window of her house,



as a sign to the Israelites. Nor less apparent was an erring fancy, when, in the second century, this interpretation was admitted by Justin Martyr, and amplified by Irenæus, when he discovered the Persons of the Trinity in the two spies!

Justin Martyr appears indeed peculiarly unfitted to lay claim to authority. It is notorious that he supposed a pillar erected on the island of the Tiber to Semo Sancus, an old Sabine deity, to be a monument erected by the Roman people in honour of the impostor Simon Magus. Were so gross a mistake to be made by a modern writer, in relating an historical fact, exposure would immediately take place, and his testimony would thenceforward be suspected. And assuredly, the same measure should be meted to Justin Martyr, who so egregiously errs in reference to a fact alluded to by Livy the historian.

In addition to this want of accuracy, Justin Martyr appears frequently to quote the Scriptures from memory, instead of from the text; and strange indeed are the inferences he draws. Thus he imagines there is a prophecy of our Lord's crucifixion in the expression, "I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people;" and another in the words of the same prophet, which he alters from "the government,"

to, "the power of the cross shall be upon his shoulder." Justin Martyr went still farther, and discovered the symbol of the cross in the masts of shipping, the implements of husbandry, the tools of the carpenter, and even the position of the eyebrows and nose in the human face, which latter idea he considered to be referred to in the words of Jeremiah, "The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord," Lam. iv. 20. And to mention only one more fact, as illustrative of the same proneness to error and extravagance. Justin attempted to show, that as Christ was the Logos, the impersonation of the Divine wisdom, so all persons possessed of any high degree of this quality, such for instance as Socrates, were really Christians. Let us be perfectly ready to approve what was good in the sentiments and conduct of this father, a martyr to the Christian cause; but with such facts before us, we must not treat him even with the deference which is due to many of other times.

One fact should here be fully kept in view. So early as the third century, there was a sect, at the head of which was Clement of Alexandria, who professed to select all that was good from the writings of the philosophers, especially Plato, and then considered the system they thus formed, as a gift divinely imparted to the Greeks, as the Old Testament was bestowed on

the Jews, to prepare them for the coming of our Lord. To reconcile their scheme to the Scriptures, they endeavoured to find in it hidden or mystical meanings, very different indeed from the obvious import of the text, but considered by them far more valuable. They supposed that the agreement between this occult sense and that which had been derived from heathen philosophy was complete; and they affirmed that the interpretations thus obtained, had descended to them from the apostles, though they had always been concealed from the vulgar.

Origen, another of the fathers, is chargeable in consequence with many extravagancies. Educated in the public school of Pantænus, in which the mode of interpretation just described was constantly inculcated, he was likely to prove an erring guide, especially when his previous inclination to the same course is considered. When a leader in a modern sect was asked how it was that so much that was novel appeared in the sentiments avowed, when they were professedly drawn from the Scriptures, the answer was, "What others take literally, we receive as figurative, and what they consider figurative, we regard as literal;" and yet this mode, absurd as it manifestly is, Origen frequently adopted. Accordingly he refused to have more than one coat, would only

wear sandals on his feet, and declined to look for the supply of his daily wants, asserting, most untruly, that such were the requirements of the gospel.

Far beyond this, however, did Origen proceed. When urging Ambrose and Theoctetus to repeat the words, and form the resolution of the psalmist, "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord," he pretends to show that this cup is martyrdom, because Jesus said to his disciples, "Are ye able to drink of the *cup* that I shall drink of?" and, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this *cup* pass from me!" His reasoning is, the word cup in the last two passages denotes martyrdom, therefore in the former it has the same signification. Thus a most erroneous principle is adopted, and it is supposed that the same word must always mean the same thing, notwithstanding the connexion in which it stands plainly shows that a different sense is intended. According to this, the water which Christ promises to them that believe, is merely the common element; the satisfaction derived from doing the will of his Father was literally meat; and the ransomed of the Lord may look for crowns and thrones like those possessed by the sovereigns of this world: a mode of interpretation which a moment's enlightened thought would immediately reject. Still

further, when Origen finds that the three evangelists in recording the agony of the garden, describe the Redeemer as saying, not, Let *the* cup, but, “ Let *this* cup pass from me,” he ventures to infer that our Lord had no fear of violent death, but an objection to that of the cross, because he considered some other mode of martyrdom to be preferable ; thus daringly charging rebellion against God on Him who said, “ Not as I will, but as thou wilt.” Thus erring, and even grossly erring as the judgments of the fathers often were, it is absolutely necessary that their statements should be submitted to rigid examination, instead of being regarded as at all authoritative.

There is, however, another reason which leads to precisely the same conclusion. The Romanist, be it observed, assigns oral tradition as the foundation of many things in faith and discipline ; while, on the contrary, it is contended, and this on a very simple, but forcible principle, that they have no such basis. Were a foreigner to observe a person wearing in his hat on the 29th of May an oak-apple, and to ask the reason of so doing, the answer would be, supposing the individual possessed of common intelligence, that it referred to a fact in the history of king Charles II., who was secreted in an oak after the battle of Worcester.

In such a case the inquirer could have full satisfaction ; for appealing to the history of England, the fact—of which the oak-apple is a continued memorial—would be placed beyond dispute. But, when any one asks for authority for holy water, the burning of candles, the offering of incense, masses for souls in purgatory, the celibacy of the clergy, and many other ceremonies and practices in the church of Rome, and the reply is, Tradition ; he may go back to the time of its pretended origin, and find not a single practice of the kind, nor a solitary passage for their support in the writings of the primitive fathers. The epistles of Clement and Barnabas were probably written before the completion of the New Testament, and therefore their views of Christianity were chiefly derived from the oral instructions of the apostles. Yet even they never claim any authority for these instructions ; but invariably appeal, and that decidedly, to the Scriptures, generally of the Old Testament.

The epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians contains many allusions to the writings of the apostle Paul ; and references are also made in it to passages in the four Gospels, which are quoted apparently with full satisfaction, as parts of a Divine revelation : yet not the slightest intimation is given throughout of there being any matter



of faith not included in the inspired records. On the contrary, he distinctly says, "The blessed and renowned Paul did, with all exactness and soundness, teach the words of truth; and being gone from you, wrote an epistle to you, into which, if you look, you will be able to edify yourselves in the faith which has been delivered unto you; which is the mother of us all, being followed with hope, and led on by a general love both towards God and towards Christ, and towards our neighbours. For if any man has these things, he has fulfilled the law of righteousness."

Here, then, are several reasons which lead to the conclusion that the transmission to us of the Divine will by tradition, is improbable; but there are others yet to be adduced which tend to show that it is absolutely impossible. For example, it is inconsistent with just conceptions of the character of God. Jehovah is perfect in wisdom, and hence it is no less characteristic of this attribute to choose the fittest means for the accomplishment of his purposes, than to aim at those ends which are the most honourable. The object proposed in the case before us, is the guidance of man in reference to his highest interests, and the honour of his great and glorious Benefactor; but those who hold the doctrine of oral tradition, assume that to his word, which has

received his special sanction, has been added a testimony—committed to the precarious conveyance of the human memory—accompanied by no such authority; and also that the superior, so far as the warrant goes, is altered, modified, and displaced, by that which is subordinate. Such a course is manifestly unworthy the Supreme Being, who throughout his administration, appears employing such instruments alone as are appropriate and efficient.

Again : Jehovah is as certainly the God of truth, and consequently his statements, however they come, must harmonize. Should it, however, be objected, that the full agreement cannot now be perceived between certain parts of his revealed word, the answer is, That such instances belong exclusively to matters of faith; from those of practice, with which we are now concerned, all mystery is shut out. The path of faith is necessarily surrounded by “clouds and darkness;” the path of duty is as necessarily clear and open. Harmony is required as the condition of any obedience. When, therefore, the Scriptures charge us not to bow down to any graven image, and tradition presents us with such objects for adoration; when the Scriptures affirm that there is only one Mediator between God and man, and tradition points to the Virgin Mary, angels, and saints, as holding



a similar office ; when the Scriptures declare that we are unprofitable servants, and tradition tells of some having a superabundance of merit, which may be made available to others—it is easy to see that these are statements diametrically opposed ; hence we may conclude that they could not come alike from the God of truth. Surely then we must take the Scriptures, sustained as they are by such a weight of evidence, and reject tradition, whose claims are deceptive, since it is equally unworthy of the Divine wisdom and truth.

It is no less evident, that the doctrine of oral tradition casts dishonour on the written word of God. For this alone inspiration is pleaded by Papists as well as Protestants ; and in this very fact there is a strong reason for considering it a perfect and infallible standard. Why was extraordinary and miraculous aid afforded, except to produce a record of the highest order ? If such be not the character of the sacred volume, where can any testimony, sustaining such a one, be found ? This, too, is the distinction to which it prefers the strongest claims. What was the language of Moses to the Israelites. “Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you,” Deut. iv. 2. “What

thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it," Deut. xii. 32. A large part of the Psalms of David is occupied by an eulogy on the portion of the inspired record which he possessed; thus he writes, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple," Psa. xix. 7. Solomon says, "Every word of God is pure: add thou not unto his words," Prov. xxx. 5, 6. When the Jews were prone to repair to other sources in pursuit of knowledge, the language of Isaiah was, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them," Isa. viii. 20. Our Lord affirmed that if the brethren of the rich man would not hear Moses and the prophets, they would not be persuaded though one rose from the dead, Luke xvi. 29—31. Paul, the great apostle of the Gentiles, says, "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed," Gal. i. 8, 9. Addressing Timothy he writes, "From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures,

which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness : that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works," 2 Tim. iii. 15—17. And peculiarly solemn is the declaration of John, as he closes the book of Revelation : " I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book : and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book," Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

Such then are the terms in which the Scriptures describe their own character ; for " God has magnified his word above all his name ;" and it appears as a grant second in importance only to " the unspeakable gift" of our Lord Jesus Christ. Yet so far from tradition allowing this fact to be recognized, it absolutely rejects it, and awfully depreciates the Scriptures as a guide to man. It demands, in fact, that revelation should give place to tradition. The Roman Catholic writers

uniformly describe the sacred volume as an unintelligible record, a dead letter, until explained by the interpretations of the church. It has been even affirmed that without these, the Scriptures are of no more value than Esop's Fables! Where can a grosser libel, a more atrocious calumny, be found? Our blessed Lord said to the Jews of old, "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye," Mark vii. 7, 9, 13. And in these terms we may justly regard him as appealing with the deepest emphasis, to every Romanist, and every one who maintains the same error.

One more reason may yet be cited for the rejection of tradition; it is its entire unfitness to accomplish the purposes of God in reference to man. His great design is, that we may be "partakers of his holiness." Hence the petition of our Lord; "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth," John xvii. 17. But tradition is not a purifying instrument. It can direct the man to pass through papistical observances, but if there be no other power, it leaves him like the Pharisees of old, a whited sepulchre—fair without, but within full of all

uncleanness. And so it must be in every instance ; for the renewal of the heart is the result of the Holy Spirit's operation ; and his sword is the word of God, not tradition. The members of the Roman Catholic church who have proved, or now prove themselves to be new creatures, are so as the result of a Divine energy, accompanying the truths of the gospel. To this rule there never was, there never will be one solitary exception. And thus, to sum up what has been stated, since it is *improbable* that tradition is authoritative, because Christ condemned its use by the Jews as exceedingly injurious ; because intrusted only to the treasury of the human memory and the utterance of human lips, it would be an extremely precarious and uncertain mode of communication, and because the writers of primitive times make no pretension to such authority, but appeal invariably to the inspired records : so it is *impossible* that it should be of such authority, because it is inconsistent with the wisdom and truth of God, degrades that volume on which he has conferred especial honour, and is as utterly incompetent to the renovation of the soul of man, as a human instrument ever must be, to effect a Divine work.

Here then let the true follower of Christ take his stand ; rejecting the deceptive meteor of tradition, and

accepting gratefully that word which is given "as a lamp to our feet and a light to our path." Jesus, the great Apostle of our profession, is full of grace and truth; a few words from his lips are worth infinitely more than human genius ever uttered. Hail any finger that points to the spot where he may be found; any arm on which you may lean, while you approach his cross; but withstand every effort to urge or to allure you into another path. The traditions of men would shroud us in darkness, but "the entrance of his word giveth light;" they would leave us "tied and bound by the chain of our sins," but, as he speaks, "we are free indeed;" yea, they would abandon us to the bondage of spiritual death, but at his almighty fiat, a new life pervades the soul—the life of God, the life of immortality.

## LETTER IV.

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THE BIBLE, THE RELIGION OF PROTESTANTS—THE CANON OF SCRIPTURE NOT DETERMINED BY THE ROMISH CHURCH—CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROTESTANT IN REFERENCE TO IT CONTRASTED WITH THOSE OF THE PAPIST—HOSTILITY TO THE WORD OF GOD EXHIBITED AND EXPLAINED—SERVICES OF THE ROMISH CHURCH IN LATIN.

THE words of Chillingworth, my dear children, are worthy to be engraved on your memories. “THE BIBLE, I say, the BIBLE only, is the religion of Protestants! Whatsoever else they believe besides it, and the plain, irrefragable, indubitable *consequences* of it, well may they hold it as a matter of opinion; but as matter of faith and religion, neither can they, with coherence to their own grounds believe it themselves, nor require the belief of it of others, without most high and most schismatical presumption. I for my part, after a long and (as I verily believe and hope) impartial search of the *true way to eternal happiness*, do profess plainly, that I cannot find any rest for the sole of my foot but upon this rock only.



“Traditive interpretations of Scripture are pretended; but there are few or none to be found: no tradition, but only of Scripture, can derive itself from the fountain, but may be plainly proved either to have been brought in, in such an age after Christ, or that in such an age it was not in. In a word, there is no sufficient *certainty* but of Scripture only for any considering man to build upon. This therefore, and this only, I have reason to believe: this I will profess, according to this I will live, and for this, if there be occasion, I will not only willingly, but even gladly, lose my life, though I should be sorry that *Christians* should take it from me.” (Vol. ii. part 1, ch. vi., sec. 56.)

When, however, we thus contend for the supremacy of Scripture, it is often affirmed by the Romanist, that the fact of its inspiration rests with *his* church, by which he says, the books thus distinguished from all others were finally determined. To this it may be replied, that were such the work of the Romish church, it was very ill done; for the council of Trent included Tobit and Judith, Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus, and the two books of the Maccabees, with the Old Testament Scriptures. Now, it is manifest that the books of the Apocrypha are without authority; none of them are extant in Hebrew, in which the Old Testament was



written ; they were the composition, for the most part, of Alexandrian Jews, after the prophetic spirit had ceased ; not one of their writers advances a direct claim to inspiration, and some expressly disclaim it ; nor were they ever received into the sacred canon by the Jewish church, or sanctioned by the Redeemer or his apostles. In addition to this want of authority, they contain many things which are false, and others that are absurd ; as when Judith justifies the destruction of the Shechemites, which the Scriptures condemn ; when Baruc is said to have been carried into Babylon, in contradiction to the testimony of Jeremiah that he was taken into Egypt ; when a demon is represented as expelled by smoke ; or when the tabernacle and ark are represented as walking after a prophet in obedience to his command ! And yet the Apocrypha forms part of the Roman Catholic Bible ! thus blending truth with error, the fine gold of Ophir with base alloy, and trying to impress alike the stamp of inspiration on poison and on food.

Such is the work of the Roman Catholic church ; but the fixing of the canon of Holy Scripture was not its work. The determination of what books are to be received as inspired, rests on totally different grounds. The Jews, before the time of the Redeemer, were unable to

add to the sacred records, having lost the ancient Hebrew tongue, and widely departed from its genius, while apart from their reverence for the sacred writings, and the Greek version of them which was extant, the sanction of Christ to the integrity of the Old Testament, places it beyond dispute. It is equally certain, that the Roman Church did not determine the canon of the New Testament ; since in the decrees of its early councils no catalogue of its books can be found.

The Gospels, it may be remarked, authenticate each other by their concurrent testimony ; while the last recognising the rest, and adding matters not recorded in them, impresses on them the authority of St. John. The Acts of the Apostles—the work of St. Luke—the first thirteen epistles of St. Paul, the first epistle of St. Peter, and the first epistle of St. John, were always acknowledged to be written by these persons. And as to the other seven books—the epistle to the Hebrews, the epistle of St. James, the second epistle of St. Peter, the second and third epistles of St. John, the epistle of St. Jude, and the Revelation—some doubts were entertained for a short period as to the right of these books to be admitted into the sacred canon ; but the question was set at rest as to the whole, by a generally concurring testimony concerning them—such a

testimony as there is in reference to the works of Cæsar, Virgil, or Tacitus, but to a much superior degree ; in a word, by evidence both external and internal. This attestation indeed was that of foes, as well as of friends ; for Celsus, Julian, Porphyry, and other early adversaries of Christianity, admitted that the books of the New Testament were written by the persons whose names they bear. And all this was settled before the division of the eastern from the western church ; before the papacy had assumed the distinct and marked features it now presents ; in a word, before the days of Popery.

Rejecting then the statement, that the Roman Church has decided on what is really inspired Scripture, we are often met with the charge that the Protestant Bibles are corrupt ; and hence it will be desirable to ascertain what is the actual position of the parties, at issue in reference to the word of God. To begin, therefore, with that of the Romanists: it appears from the testimony of Augustine, that the Latin church had a very great number of versions of the Scriptures, made by unknown authors at the first introduction of Christianity, and that as soon as any one found in primitive times, a Greek copy, and thought himself sufficiently versed in both languages, he attempted to translate it. One of these, however, was, for several ages, preferred to the rest, for its clearness

and fidelity ; but, before the end of the fourth century, the alterations made by transcribers either from accident or design, were very numerous. At the request, and under the patronage of Pope Damasus, Jerome undertook to revise it, and render it more conformable to the original Greek. But before his task was finished, he began a translation of the Old Testament from the Hebrew into Latin ; and his version receiving the sanction of Pope Gregory I., has been exclusively adopted by the Roman Catholic church, under the name of the Vulgate. In the sixteenth century, the council of Trent decreed that the Vulgate was authentic, and commanded that this version only should be used whenever the Bible was publicly read, and in all disputations, sermons, and expositions.

A multiplication of copies led to new errors, and to three corrected editions ; but the last not being approved in every respect by Pope Sixtus v., he commanded a new revision of the text to be made, and forbade the use of any other. Still this edition was found to be so exceedingly incorrect, that his successor, Pope Clement VIII. suppressed it, and published another, with a similar prohibition.

The predicament of the Romanist is therefore not a little remarkable, appearing, as he does, obnoxious to

penalty—to that of the council of Trent, if he read any other than the version it specially sanctioned ; to that of Sixtus, if he read this one ; and to that of Clement, if he read any but his : and under all circumstances, so far as his church is concerned, the Romanist is dependent on a translation which has many errors, and gives the same place to the Apocrypha that is allotted to the inspired writings of the Old and New Testament.

We will now look at the position of the Protestant, in reference to the Scriptures. Left entirely at liberty from the assertions and mandates of the popes, he can appeal to the originals. The Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament at present known to be extant, were written between the years 1000 and 1457 ; and hence it is inferred, that all produced before the years 700 or 800 were destroyed, on account of their variations from copies then declared to be genuine by some decree of the Jewish senate. And here a singular fact is worthy of remembrance. It was supposed that as the Jews who are settled in India, and other parts of the East, had for so many ages been separated from their brethren in the west, their manuscripts would contain a text derived from the autographs of the sacred writers, by a channel totally independent of the one through which we have received the text of our printed Bibles.

These expectations have been fully realized. The late Dr. Buchanan brought from India various biblical manuscripts ; and among them a copy of the Pentateuch, written on a roll of goat-skins, dyed red, which he discovered in the record chest of a synagogue of the Black Jews in the interior of Malayala. The book of Leviticus, and the greater part of Deuteronomy are wanting. It consists, in its present state, of thirty-seven skins ; contains one hundred and seventeen columns of writing, perfectly clear and legible ; and exhibits a noble specimen of the form and manner of the most ancient Hebrew manuscripts. It is thought that the roll comprises the fragments of at least three different rolls, of one common material, and exhibits three different specimens of writing. The result of a comparison of this manuscript, now deposited in the public library at Cambridge, with different printed editions, confirms the integrity of the Hebrew text. The variations are comparatively few, and none of them are found to differ from the common reading as to the sense or interpretation.

It is also worthy of observation, that two or three hundred years before Christ, the Jewish Scriptures were translated into Greek. This version is known by the name of the Septuagint, because it has been said, by some, to be the work of seventy, or seventy-two inter-



preters, who came for this purpose from Judea to Egypt, at the request of Ptolemy Philadelphus ; but it was evidently made at different times, and by different writers, though undoubtedly for the use of the Jews, before the birth of Christ.

We may, therefore, rest perfectly satisfied that the Old Testament has come to us uncorrupted, and entire. Christians could not have mutilated it, for had they done so, the injury would have been exposed by the Jews ; and of such a one they have never complained. And the Jews could not have corrupted it in any essential passages, for had they done so, to assign no other reason, the fraud would have been declared by Christ and his apostles ; or had it been effected after their time, their followers, who have been in possession of the Jewish books, would have announced it to the world. In fact, the Jews did take some liberties with the chronology of the early patriarchs, about two hundred years after Christ, and their having so done was fully exposed by Christian writers, who lived soon afterwards.

The manuscripts of the New Testament, which were written either by the apostles, or others under their direction, in the Greek language, have long since perished, leaving us no fragment of their history. Still, the evidence for the integrity and uncorruptness of this portion

of the Scriptures, in every thing material, is perfectly satisfactory. Its contents are precisely the same now as they were in the first two centuries; for the reverence of early Christians for the sacred writings, the multiplication of copies read in public and private, the silence of the enemies of the truth, who would not have failed to detect any attempt at alteration, the agreement of all the manuscripts and versions extant, as well as that which subsists between the New Testament, and all the quotations from it which occur in the writings of Christians from the earliest to the present time, unite to establish the fact.

It is, moreover, worthy of remark, that Dr. Buchanan visited the Syrian churches in Malayala, and was informed by the inhabitants, that to their knowledge, no European had visited the place before. They affirmed that their version of the Scriptures was copied from that used by the primitive Christians at Antioch, and brought to India, before or about the council of Nice, A.D. 325, at which, it is said, Johannes, bishop of India, attended. It is also declared by the Syrian Christians, that their copies have always been exact transcripts of that version, without known error, through every age, to the present time. One volume found in a remote church of the mountains, contains the Old and New Testa-



ments, engrossed on strong vellum, and written with beautiful accuracy. The Syrians assign to it a high antiquity ; and from a comparison of it with old manuscripts in Europe, its date has been referred to the seventh century. It admits, as canonical, the epistle of Clement, but it omits the Revelation, which was not received by some churches during a part of the early ages. The order of books of the Old and New Testament differs from that of the European copies, but in almost every other respect, it agrees with those obtained ages ago through other channels.

The opportunity of consulting the original Scriptures, as possessed by Protestants, but forbidden to Romanists, ought to be highly valued by all who are able to render it available ; while those who are not, may often obtain satisfaction from the same source, through the medium of others in whom they have confidence. There we apply to the spring-head of revelation. It is not, however, to be inferred, that those who can only appeal to “ the authorized version ” of the Scriptures, are without the means of ascertaining accurately the will of God. According to the testimony of the ablest scholars, the cases are few in which the sense of the original is not given ; while the words printed in italics, so as to complete what the translators considered the meaning,

enable the reader to form his own opinion as to their accuracy. Improvements might doubtless be made, but it should be remembered, that men of eminence, yet differing among themselves both as to doctrine and discipline, have united in attesting the great excellence of the English version of the Bible.

The circumstances of the Papist, so far as a version of the Scriptures in the vernacular tongue is concerned, are far inferior to our own. In the year 1582, an English New Testament was printed at Rheims, but it was translated not from the original Greek, but from the Latin Vulgate. A multitude of Greek words were allowed to remain untranslated, under the pretext that adequate English terms in which they might be rendered, were wanting. The result was, that it was unintelligible to common readers. Hence the remark was made, that "it is a translation which needed to be translated," and that its editors, whose names are not known, "by all means laboured to suppress the light of truth under one pretence or other." A folio volume is also accessible, entitled, "A Confutation of the Rheimists' Translations, Glosses, and Annotations on the New Testament, so far as they contain manifest impieties, heresies, idolatries, superstitions, profaneness, treasons, slanders, absurdities, falsehoods, and other evils"—a formidable catalogue

indeed—"by Thomas Cartwright, sometime Divinity Reader of Cambridge." A still more able exposure of the fallacies of this Romish version has been also made, with great care, by Fulke.

A translation from the Vulgate of the Old Testament was made at Douay, whence it is called the Douay Bible, in two volumes quarto, the first of which appeared in 1609, and the second in 1610. In this case, as in that of the Rheimish Testament, notes and annotations overwhelm the text: united they form the only English Bible used by the Romanists of this kingdom. These efforts, on their parts, remind us of the bed of Procrustes, for as that stretched its victims to the utmost, or shortened them at pleasure, so do Romanists add to the word of God, or take from it, in the vain hope of bolstering up their system, which the Bible, in its purity, utterly condemns.

With these facts fully in view, it now becomes us to consider another article of the Popish system—that the Roman church is the only proper interpreter of the Scriptures. It assumes this office on the plea of infallibility. But here the question arises, Where does this infallibility reside? And this is one not definitely answered. If it be said, It is an attribute of the pope, as the head of the church, his infallibility can-

not be admitted ; while the character of many who attained this office is notorious from their own historians. John XXIII. was openly charged, at the council of Constance, with the blackest and most enormous crimes, under seventy articles, and consequently was deposed. If it be alleged that councils are infallible, this cannot be admitted, in the remembrance of the one that condemned John Huss to martyrdom, and which led to a proverb among the Swabians, that it would take more than thirty years to cleanse Constance by any expiatory sacrifice from those foul abominations which were most disgracefully committed in it by the council itself, and the immoral lives of the prelates that attended. Mark also the words of Gregory Nazianzen, one of the canonized of the Romish church, who declares that he never saw a synod which had a happy termination. He compared the dissensions that prevailed to the quarrels of geese and cranes, and represents such disputations as calculated not to correct and reform, but to demoralize the spectator. He characterized the Byzantine assembly as a factious, tumultuous rabble, composed only of wretches fit for the house of correction, newly taken from the plough, the oar, the army, and the chain.

The words of the celebrated Bossuet on this subject are also applicable and important. “ So long since as the

council of Vienne, a great prelate commissioned by the pope to prepare matters to be treated upon, laid it down for a ground-work to the whole assembly, that they ought to reform the church in the head and members. The great schism which happened soon after, made this saying current, not among particular doctors only, as Gersen, Peter d'Ailly, and other great men of those times, but in councils too; and nothing was more frequently repeated in those of Pisa and Constance. What happened in the council of Basil, where a reformation was unfortunately eluded, and the church re-involved in new divisions, is well known."

Let it be remembered, that this picture was drawn by the most able and cautious of the Roman divines, at the beginning of the seventeenth century. And what was it that prevented the proposed reformation? A revival of the great schism, which for fifty years had kept the Roman church divided between two or three popes, who claimed at one and the same time to be vicars of Christ. It was a fierce contest between the council of Constance and Eugenius iv. who had convened it, and a sentence of excommunication pronounced by the council against this very pope. It was a rival council, convoked at Ferrara by Eugenius, when thus cut off, where he employed the same arms against the fathers

assembled at Basil. It was the deposition of Eugenius, and the installation of Felix v. by the offended council; and, in fine, the triumph of Rome over a reformation needed alike by the head and the members. The head, unwilling to be reformed, imprecated the curse of God on the members; and the members, finding the head incurable, consigned it to perdition, and chose for themselves another. Such are the events which took place in "the council of Basil, where a reformation was unfortunately eluded, and the church re-involved in new divisions;" and such is a fair specimen of the unity of the Romish church.

To look for any other standard of infallibility in that church would be equally vain. Of infallibility much is affirmed; but the place of its residence has yet to be pointed out. Chillingworth said truly, "I see plainly and with mine own eyes, that there are popes against popes, councils against councils, some fathers against others, the same fathers against themselves, a consent of fathers of one age against a consent of fathers of another age, the church of one age against the church of another age," (vol. ii., part 1, chap. vi.) But were it otherwise, and were any individual announced to be infallible, still, with the Bible, bearing on it the impress of inspiration, in our hands, we must re-

quire evidence of equal authority with the word of God, before we yielded to his commands, as supplying the law of our practice, or our faith.

But never can such evidence be given. A true follower of the Lord Jesus Christ cannot therefore submit to the authority of the church of Rome, because to do so would be a voluntary degradation of the mental powers given him by God. Not that reason is to be constituted a judge of religion ; we are never to submit its doctrines to this test, but we are to try its evidence. We are to examine the claims of the Scriptures to their proper rank, and to settle by the laws of criticism and common sense their import ; but here human reason is to stop. A voice addresses us, saying, " Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther." To pass the appointed limit is to exchange the character of a scholar for that of a teacher, and to incur the presumption of a worm of the earth dictating to its Creator. But not to proceed thus far, were to sink to the level of irrational animals, and to proclaim our incapacity for the pursuit of truth to be like theirs. The natural world is opened to the full range of the powers of man, and none should attempt to shut him out from traversing the moral world. Here is the field for his noblest employments, for never is he so properly employed as



when endeavouring to acquire just views of the character of God, his relation to him as a responsible creature, the obligations it behoves him to regard, and the hopes it is his privilege to entertain.

Again ; a being endowed with reason, and accountable to his Maker, ought not to submit to the authority of the church of Rome, because of his individual responsibility. Can the head of that community, for the time being, be accountable to God for all its members, over whom he rules ? And yet, unless this were the case, and moreover even if he offered so to be, as his priests often propose to individuals, unless this arrangement were admitted by the Judge of the whole earth, the claim of his supremacy is most preposterous and impious. It is saying in effect, “ Your sentiments on all matters of religion, the forms of your worship, all that concerns your spiritual and immortal interests, shall be fully prescribed ; there shall be in, fact, an absolute dominion over the mind and the heart ; and that from your earliest days of reason to the last moments of your existence :” while an inspired apostle says, “ Every one of us shall give account of himself to God,” Rom. xiv. 12. Conscience, too, responds to this and similar declarations ; for while it judges of right and wrong in our individual conduct, it summons us to the higher

tribunal of our Maker, and anticipates the consequences of his sentence in another state of existence. Nor is this all, for it is equally clear that individual responsibility is proportioned to privilege. To quote, in proof, the words of Christ, let us look at the following declaration ; “ And that servant, which knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required : and to whom men have committed much, of him will they ask the more,” Luke xii. 47, 48. It is manifest, therefore, that every man must stand before the great white throne ; that every one must answer for himself, and that according to the advantages he has possessed : nor is it possible for any community, or any individual, to relieve any mortal being of one iota of the solemn responsibility under which he is placed—how then can any one possessed of reasoning powers, admit authority which leaves him without one holy principle, and without excuse, to endure the pangs of eternal condemnation ?

For, be it observed, as the last reason now to be mentioned, that a follower of Christ cannot submit to the authority of the church of Rome, because to do so would incur the aggravated condemnation denounced

against the violation of the most explicit commands. The following passages convey the meaning and force of many others. "These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart : and thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes ; and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thine house, and on thy gates," Deut. vi. 6—9, 11, 18, 19. "Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read," Isa. xxxiv. 16. "Search the Scriptures ; for in them ye think ye have eternal life : and they are they which testify of me," John v. 39. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom," Col. iii. 16. "Desire the sincere milk of the word," 1 Peter ii. 2. "Prove all things ; hold fast that which is good," 1 Thess. v. 21.

Not to refer to other parts of the Scriptures, designed to encourage and stimulate, by various means, to their personal study, what can be replied to the claim that is set up, in the view of these inspired precepts ? Only that as we appreciate the blessings connected with obedience, and tremble at the judgments which will fall on the transgressor, we reject the authority of the church of Rome, in the resolution, by the grace of God, to pursue the one, and to flee the other.

Again, then, let every true Protestant say with Chil-

lingworth, as he points to the Bible, "Propose me any thing out of this book, and require whether I believe it or no, and seem it never so incomprehensible to human reason, I will subscribe it with hand and heart, as knowing no demonstration can be stronger than this—God hath said so, therefore is it true. In other things I will take no man's liberty of judgment from him, neither shall any man take mine from me. I will think no man the worse man, nor the worse Christian, I will love no man the less, for differing in opinion from me. And what measure I mete to others, I expect from them again. I am fully assured that God does not, and therefore that men ought not, to require any more of any man than this—To believe the Scripture to be God's word, to endeavour to find the true sense of it, and to live according to it." (Vol. ii. part 1, chap. vi. sec. 56.)

Popery enjoins, it is obvious, a diametrically opposite course. Among the canons of the council of Toulouse, held in the early part of the thirteenth century, there is one which prohibits the laity from having the books of the Old or New Testament, "unless it be a psalter, or a breviary, and the rosary," and does not permit them so much as to translate them into the vulgar tongue. The language of the council of Trent should also be noticed: "Since it is manifest by

experience, that if the sacred books in the vulgar tongue are allowed every where without distinction, more of injury than of profit will be the result, through the rashness of men—let it in this respect rest with the judgment of the bishop or inquisitor that, with the advice of the parish priest or confessor, they may grant the reading of the Bible, translated by Catholic authors in the vulgar tongue, to those who they judge will be able to derive from the reading, not injury, but an increase of faith and piety; which liberty they are to have in writing. But whoever shall presume, without such permission, to *read them, or to have them, unless the books are first given up to the ordinary, cannot obtain the forgiveness of sins.* Booksellers who shall sell, or otherwise dispose of, the Bible in the vulgar tongue to a person not having the prescribed license, shall forfeit the price of the books, to be converted by the bishop to pious uses, and shall be liable to other punishments according to the magnitude of the offence in the judgment of the bishop. But regulars may neither read nor purchase it without a license obtained from their own superiors." (See *De Libris Prohibitis, Regula ix.*)

The influence of this decree may be traced to the present day, in a fearful ignorance among Romanists

of the revealed will of God. A few proofs of its existence may here be given.

A gentleman whom I had recently the pleasure of seeing, when in Mexico, a few years since, entered one of the churches, and was occupied for some time in looking at its pictures and statues. While thus engaged he suddenly heard the sound of footsteps behind him, and turning round he observed one of the priests approaching. A conversation then ensued as to the various objects in the church, which was, at length, interrupted by the priest remarking that it was his turn to read a part of the Psalms of David in the daily service. On looking at the book in the hands of the priest, the traveller remarked, "These are not the Psalms of David;" an assertion which the former at once disputed: still he was in error, for he was actually about to read part of one of the Epistles of John. It afterwards appeared, that though this individual had been a priest for many years, he had never seen a Bible!

The Rev. J. Godkin says, in his "Guide from the Church of Rome to the Church of Christ," which is, in fact, his own history, in reference to an early part of his course:—

"I was sitting with my friend, the schoolmaster, in the summer-house, to which we were accustomed in fine

weather to retire, to pursue our studies after school hours, as I had engaged to teach him French in exchange for his Latin. The declining sun darted down his golden beams through the openings of the green canopy above us, and illuminated the gilt edges of my Bible, a corner of which was conspicuous in my pocket. We were at that moment warmly disputing about the grammatical construction of a particular passage, when his eye was suddenly arrested by the corner of the Bible. He was silent—blushed—looked at my face, then at the Bible, and then at my face again.

“ ‘What is that in your pocket?’ he inquired, with a look that spoke surprise and anger.

“ ‘The question,’ I replied, ‘is one that I might be excused from answering: but I have no hesitation in avowing that it is a Bible,’ and so saying I handed it to him.

“ ‘Where did you get this?’ said he, glancing at the title page.

“ ‘Mr. N—— persuaded me to take it. I was unwilling to do so; but as he promised to take so many copies of the poem, I thought it hard to refuse, and so brought it with me merely to please him. But were it otherwise,’ said I, ‘may I ask why I am not at liberty to read what book I please?’



“ ‘ Oh, of course,’ said he drily, ‘ but in taking that book from such a man, you countenance the calumny that Catholics have no Bibles themselves.’

“ ‘ That is a fact, and not a calumny, so far as we and our neighbours are concerned ; for I do not know a single person that has one, with the exception of Mr. P——, who seems to keep his two folio volumes, with their notes and comments, more for ornament than use.’

“ ‘ Use !’ said he with a sneer, ‘ I hope you are not among the number of those who deem the Bible a useful book. I hope there are few in the nineteenth century that entertain such an obsolete notion, at least, beyond those little coteries that fatten on the property of the public.’

“ ‘ Still, my friend, it seems not quite just to pass such a sweeping censure on the Bible, without examining of it. It might turn out, after all, not so worthless, or so pernicious a book, as we are willing to think. We are condemning it, you know, unheard, and this is unjust as regards the Bible, and foolish as regards ourselves. What if this book should be found to be indeed the word of God ? I confess that this reflection gives me considerable uneasiness. This may be weakness, and such I am sure it appears to you ; but it may more

probably be the beginning of wisdom. However,' I continued, with an air of cheerfulness, 'you need not fear that I am about to do any thing injurious to my character. I shall return this book, because it is dangerous to keep it; yet I cannot but lament the tyranny of public opinion, to which even you and I, free-thinkers as we are, are compelled to bow.'

"My friend, of course, did not betray my secret, and it extended no farther until I had an opportunity of restoring the Bible.

"Well, I was ashamed of this blessed book! I was disconcerted and confused when it was discovered in my possession! Alas, how blind—how foolish is man! Here was a book which revealed the will of my Creator, which unfolded the character of God, the condition of man, the awful doom that awaits the sinner, and the means by which the doom may be averted; but instead of joyfully receiving this glorious revelation—instead of studying with avidity this charter of salvation, and earnestly appropriating its blessings, I was actually ashamed of it, and wished to cast it from me, as the viper was flung from the hand of Paul. 'O God! what is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that thou dost consider him.' "

To add only one more fact of the same kind:—

At the Annual Meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society, in 1839, the Rev. T. S. Grimshawe said, in reference to a visit recently paid to Italy:—

“To show how little the Bible is known, even by some who ought to be the interpreters of it, I may state that a priest one day entered into conversation with me, and challenged me to enter on the points of controversy between us. I told him I had no particular wish to do so; but if he challenged me, I was Protestant enough to accept it; provided that the basis of our argument might be a reference to the Bible.

“Having accepted this as the basis, he said, ‘Now, sir, what is your objection to us?’

“I said, ‘My objection is this—You exclude the Bible.’

“‘We do not exclude the Bible; you Protestants are constantly casting that imputation on us; we do not exclude the Bible.’

“I said, ‘Sir, pardon me: I can find the Bible nowhere here; or else it is in such a form, as almost to prevent the possibility of its purchase. I went into one of the principal booksellers’ shops in Rome the other day, and said, “I want a Bible.” “Very well, sir; here is one.” “Why,” I said, “this is a series of volumes; do you call this the Bible?” “Yes, sir.”

“Pray, how many volumes are there? It looks more like a library than the Bible.” “Sir,” he said, “there are seventy-seven volumes.” Seventy-seven volumes! I counted them one after the other, and the number was seventy-seven. In fact, the work was so overladen with notes, that it was like the Tarpeian maid sinking under the weight of her ornaments; you could scarcely recognise the text, owing to the mass of note and comment with which it was encompassed.

“The priest replied to all this: ‘Well, we have the Bible.’

“I said, ‘Pray, sir, have you one in your possession at this moment?’

“‘I have.’

“‘Will you have the kindness to produce it?’

“He produced what he called his Bible; but what was my astonishment, when I found it to be a Roman Breviary!

“I immediately said, ‘Pray, sir, do you call this the Bible?’

“‘Yes, look at it: here is a reference to the Psalms: here are extracts from Isaiah and Jeremiah, and from one sacred writer and another: surely it is the same thing.’

“I said, ‘No, sir; extracts from a book can by no

argument of logic ever be considered to be the book itself.'

"But all that I could get from him was the common phrase, '*C'est la même chose!*' 'It is the same thing: it makes no difference.' "

Such a destitution of the word of God must be productive of the greatest evils. No wonder that one whom I well knew, when writing from France, said, "Could every pious reader of this letter be awakened on the morning of the sabbath, as I have been, by the clang of the anvil, and, on his entrance into the streets and markets, observe business prosecuted or suspended according to the tastes of the tradesmen; could he mark the workmen on seasons of religious festival, erecting the triumphal arch on the sabbath morning and removing it on the sabbath evening, and notice the labourers at their option toiling all day at the public works; could he see the card-party in the hotel, and the ninepins before every public house, and the promenaders swarming in all the suburbs; could he be compelled to witness on one Sunday a grand review of a garrison, and on another, be disturbed by the music of a company of strolling players; and could he find, among all this profanation, as I have found, no temple to which to retreat, save the barren cliff or the ocean

cave, surely he would feel and proclaim the truth, 'This people is destroyed for lack of knowledge.' Yet how can it be otherwise, when they are destitute, and that through the wilful and cherished enmity of others, of the pure word of God ?

Persecution for the possession of the word of God, so common in former times, is not yet extinct. "During the time I was in Rome, but a few months ago," said the Rev. T. S. Grimshawe, on the occasion already referred to, "there were two Augustine friars who had received Bibles, I believe from the beneficence of this Society ; and the effect had been, that their minds were enlightened ; the character of their preaching was immediately changed ; and (on the principle, that when a man once perceives the value of Divine truth himself, he feels a desire to communicate that blessing to others) these Augustine friars went through different parts of the country, as we should say, preaching the gospel, and producing a powerful effect. At length they were checked by the authority of the church of Rome, and lodged in the castle of St. — ; and there I left them, imprisoned for that great crime of reading the Bible, and preaching according to its Divine contents. And further, to show what the degree of persecution is, I would beg briefly to mention, that a

Swiss minister, distributing the Bible in a part of Italy, the name of which, perhaps, it may be more prudent not to disclose, was, in consequence, visited by the police, and commanded to leave the country in forty-eight hours. I may also state, that though he had distributed only a small portion of his books, I think about twenty-three Bibles and Testaments, those that had received them were actually imprisoned, some for six weeks, some for seven, and one for ten weeks, in consequence of having a copy in their possession."

And why are the Scriptures thus withheld and forbidden? Because, as the pope's nuncio candidly said to Dr. Pinkerton, "The papal church has some usages not supported by the Bible;" he might have said *many*; and still further, many directly in contradiction thereto. No man wishes that the light of the sun should be withheld from others, and that the gloom of midnight should rest on the earth, unless he is engaged in some design which it is his intention that they should not see, and is concerned that he may practise his nefarious deeds with impunity. It is an interest hostile to the Bible which has impelled the church of Rome to impede and prevent its circulation, and at the same time to blaspheme its Author, as if it were a book too obscure to be understood, and too



dangerous to be meddled with by the common people, except at their peril. Its outcry against the Scriptures reminds us of Milton's Satan saying to the sun, "I hate thy beams," because they remind him of the splendour from which he has fallen. Nor is this all; it cannot be concealed that the diffusion of the word of God must prove fatal to Popery. Prophecy has foretold the coming of the Lord, and "he will destroy it by the spirit of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming." A due consideration of these facts will deprive the opposition of Papists to the word of God of all mystery.

It may be here stated, that the services of the Romish Church are invariably conducted in the Latin language, which of course very few, if any, but the priests, understand; and that the practice differs alike from that of the ancient Jews, and of the apostles under the Christian dispensation. Under the Mosaic law it was said, "They read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading," Nehemiah viii. 8. Were it not required to know what is stated, the gift of tongues on the day of Pentecost was absolutely unnecessary; but as this cannot for a moment be admitted, this remarkable bestowment condemns emphatically this practice of the Romish church, as the whole reasoning of the

apostle Paul does in the 1 Cor. xiv. 19. Here he says, "In the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue;" and thus the Romanist, and the apostle guided by Divine inspiration, are completely at issue.

For the adoption of the Romish practice, however, it is easy to account; it gives precedence to the church of Rome in the view of its members, as Latin was the language of that city—it accords with the only version of the Scriptures authorized by them, which is in the same tongue—it serves to unite the priests in a common bond, and to separate them from the laity—and above all, it keeps up that ignorance, in the depths of which Popery has its greatest prosperity.

## LETTER V.

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THE POPE THE HEAD OF THE ROMISH CHURCH—HIS CLAIMS  
EXAMINED AND REFUTED—THE PONTIFEX MAXIMUS OF THE  
HEATHENS.

THE head of the Romish church is the pope. Nor is his a merely nominal dominion : on the contrary, it is great and extensive. Even at the distance from his residence, the Vatican, of the Jesuits' College at Stonyhurst, or that of the Benedictines at Douay, his supremacy is acknowledged, and his influence, and that of the cardinals who sit in his name, (for often the pope is merely a tool in the hands of others,) is felt ; while this operates also throughout the wide circle often traversed by their inmates. It is desirable, therefore, to glance at his state, and then to examine his pretensions.

As the palace of the pontiff is vast and magnificent, there are probably a greater number of apartments to be traversed amidst appearances of much splendour, in

an introduction to him, than to any sovereign of the earth. According to Fleury, a prelate in full robes always waits in his antechamber; and when the bell rings, the door of the pope's apartment opens, and he is seen seated in a chair of state, with a little table before him. The person presented kneels once at the threshold, again in the middle of the room, and lastly at the feet of the pontiff, who presents his hand to raise him, or allows him to kiss the cross embroidered on his shoes. A short conversation then follows, when the visitor is dismissed with a slight present of consecrated beads or medals, as a memorial. Again the ceremony of genuflexion is passed through, and the doors close. Such is the description given by one writer: but to the practice as thus described, there are, doubtless, some exceptions.

An American clergyman, who visited Rome in 1838, describing, in his "Glimpses of the Old World," a visit to the church of St. Gregory on the side of the Cœlian Mount, says:—

"As soon as we had passed the door, we found ourselves in a long hall or entrance, which led into the church from a back street. From the preparations that were here going forward, we saw at once that some unusual event was on the eve of transpiring. A group

of monks, with their cowls thrown back, and with the intensest interest depicted upon their countenances, stood near the outer door, in apparent anxious waiting. They did not, however, wait long. A venerable old man, clothed in scarlet, attended by a large retinue, almost immediately entered, at whose approach the monks fell back with the most respectful deference. He had scarcely trod upon the threshold, before a dozen of his attendants gathered round him; some in scarlet livery, others in rich canonicals, and others in military equipage, all of whom seemed contending to show him most respect—two or three taking his hat, as many more his cloak, and a dozen others laying hold of the train of his robes, to bear them behind them.

“My first impression was, that this was some distinguished cardinal, holding some high official station. He passed immediately by us, and entered the church by the door through which we had come into this entrance, with thirty or forty persons in attendance upon him. These were generally clad in monastic, military, and clerical dress; though some of the attendants appeared to combine both the military and clerical character—wearing both the sword and the gown. We, of course, followed them, as we were determined to see all we could of the distinguished unknown visitant. No

sooner had he entered the church, than he passed along before one of the altars, and dropped upon his knees upon a crimson velvet cushion, which had previously been placed upon the stone pavement for this purpose. All his attendants, bishops, priests, monks, and clerical esquires, instantly placed themselves two and two upon their knees behind him, holding their hats to their faces. They formed quite a long procession, and though their attitude was very devout, most of them were laughing and talking to each other as though they enjoyed the whole thing very much.

“I now had an opportunity of making some observations upon the individual to whom such marked deference was paid, as I stood only a few feet from the spot where he knelt. His appearance indicated a person who had passed full threescore and ten years. His hair was snowy white, though cut rather short; and the crown of his head, like most of the Romish priests, was shaven, and covered, except while in prayer, with a little skull-cap. There was a marked decision and sternness in his countenance, although his face was not destitute of an expression of kindliness. His silent prayer was soon finished, and he then arose; and passing the high altar, before which he reverently bowed he went to an altar on the other side of the church,

corresponding to the one before which he had previously kneeled, where was another crimson cushion, upon which he knelt, and passed through a ceremony similar to the one I have already described. He then tripped off, with an air of indifference, through a side-door into the vestry, followed by all his attendants. We had become so anxious to find out who this distinguished personage was, that we mingled in his train, and followed on to see the end of the matter. The room into which we entered was very spacious, and surrounded with beautiful paintings. The person who had so much attracted our attention, flung himself very carelessly into a splendid chair, or throne, placed in the centre of the room, when the whole attending crowd of monks instantly gathered around him, and falling upon their knees, eagerly bent forward to kiss the cross upon the toe of his slipper. The secret was now developed ! This was the pope."

Middleton strongly remarks on this homage when he says, "Of all the sovereign pontiffs of pagan Rome, it is very remarkable, that Caligula was the first who ever offered his foot to be kissed by any who approached him, which raised a general indignation through the city to see themselves reduced to suffer so great an indignity. Those who endeavoured to excuse it, said that



it was not done out of insolence, but vanity, and for the sake of showing his golden slipper set with jewels. Seneca declaims upon it in his usual manner, as the last affront to liberty, and the introduction of a Persian slavery into the manners of Rome. Yet this servile act, unworthy either to be imposed or complied with by man, is now the standing ceremonial of Christian " (Middleton would more properly have said *anti-Christian*) " Rome, and a necessary condition of access to the reigning popes ; though derived from no better origin than the frantic pride of a brutal Pagan tyrant."

On some public occasions the robes of the pope, with the exception of the stole, are the same as those of a bishop in pontificals, and of the colour, which is white, instead of purple. The tiara on his head seems originally to have been an ordinary mitre, such as is still worn by the Greek patriarchs. The three circlets, which have raised it into a triple crown, were added at different periods. The lowest seems to have been at first a mere border, but gradually enriched with gold and diamonds ; the second was invented by Boniface XIII., about the year 1300, and the third was added towards the middle of the fourteenth century. In ordinary ceremonies, the pope wears the common episcopal mitre : the use of the tiara is far more rare.

The American writer lately quoted describes the object of the pope, in visiting the church, to have been the inspection of a painting, which had been recently set up, and as he followed him to the door, adds :—" Here he was again invested with his riding dress, which was scarlet even to the hat. As he left the church, the report having already spread of the visit of his holiness, a great crowd had collected, who prostrated themselves before him, as though eager to kiss the ground upon which he trod. An elegant chariot, with six horses, was in waiting to receive him, surrounded by servants in livery, and a troop of mounted soldiers in full military dress, glittering in rich armour. Behind his chariot stood the carriages of five or six cardinals, with their attendants in splendid livery. The pope did not linger to receive the adoration of the crowd, but springing into his carriage almost by a single bound, and the attending cardinals into theirs, the whole train, preceded by the troop of cavalry, hastily drove off." The whole street for a moment seemed to glitter with arms, and splendour, and gay equipage. The prancing and richly caparisoned steeds, however, quickly bore away this princely band from our sight, and the splendid pageant vanished like a dream. We now saw nothing around us, where but a moment before all was glittering

and gaiety, save a crowd of filthy ragged beggars. This is just what Popery leaves every where behind it. Every where in papal countries, while a few are elevated to great eminence and splendour, we see the mass of the people in poverty and wretchedness. As this splendid pageant passed away, I could not but think how unlike the meek and lowly Jesus, was this haughty kingly Roman pontiff—who professes to be the vicegerent of the Son of God.”

I will make another extract from the same authority, in reference to the feast of the Annunciation:—

“ The approach of the pope, as described by one of our company, who remained without to witness the spectacle, was very imposing. The whole open area was filled with crowds of people. All the windows and balconies around the piazza were hung with crimson, and occupied by spectators. It had more the appearance of a fête day than of the sabbath. Here also were assembled several companies of troops, in martial array, with noise of drums, to receive his holiness. On this occasion, thirty-five cardinals were present; each of their carriages was decked with princely splendour, attended by four servants in beautiful livery, while the gay spirited animals that drew them, covered with rich trappings, might have stood for the picture of Job’s war-

horse. The cardinals, one after another, all arrived before the pope, but did not leave their carriages until his appearance. At length his train appeared. He rode in a chariot drawn by six horses, which was literally so entirely made of burnished brass, silver, and gold, that it seemed like the chariot of the sun. The moment his train reached the crowded area, the people gave way, the cardinals sprang from their carriages, the multitude fell upon their knees, the drums beat, and the soldiers presented their arms in sign of military reverence.

“The scene within I witnessed myself. Almost immediately after I arrived, the church became thronged with spectators. Very soon the Swiss guard, with their broad red plumes, their black and yellow striped hose, their singular breeches, and many coloured coats, belted with a girdle of yellow, each bearing a long glittering spear or halberd, arrived. Soon one and another company of troops, in full military dress, marched into the church with their brightly burnished arms, and arranged themselves in two lines down the nave of the church, quite to the door at which the procession was to enter. Directly a portion of the pope's body guards, who form the mounted cavalcade that always attends his person, when he rides out, made their entrance, clothed

in elegant military costume, and equipped with boot, and sword, and spur. With a swaggering military air they stalked through the church, and planted themselves directly around the point of entrance to the seats of the cardinals. This all occurred before the pope reached the neighbourhood of the church. At length the organ struck up a march. The drums were heard beating without. The guns of the soldiers rung on the stone pavement of the house of God, as, at the bidding of their officer, they grounded, shouldered, and presented arms. How unlike the sabbath—how unlike religion—how unlike the suitable preparation to receive a minister of the meek and lowly Jesus! Now moving slowly up, between the two armed lines of soldiers, appeared a long procession of ecclesiastics, bishops, canons, and cardinals, preceding the Roman pontiff, who was borne on a gilded chair, clad in vestments resplendent as the sun. His bearers were twelve men clad in crimson, being immediately preceded by several persons carrying a cross, his mitre, his triple crown, and other insignia of office. As he was thus borne along on the shoulders of men, amid the gaping crowds, his head was shaded or canopied by two immense fans, made of peacocks' feathers, which were borne by two attendants. He, at length, was set down in the midst

of the cardinals, near their seats, and conducted with great state to his throne. Then each cardinal, with his crimson train spread at full length, approached his throne, and went through the ceremony of salutation. Then followed the mass, with all its usual chaunting, music, kneeling, bowing, crossing, carrying of candles, burning of incense, ringing of bells, and elevation of the host. After all this was finished, the twelve girls,\* attended by some dozen officers, were brought in, walking up between the two lines of soldiers. They were dressed in white. Over their dress was drawn a singular outer garment, coming down to the waist, the top of which formed a hood or cap, which also had connected with it, a case or covering for the lower part of the face, by which the mouth was completely barricaded. Poor girls! they had frequently to pull down this mouth-covering in order to breathe.

“The cap or hood was surmounted with a tinsel crown, ornamented with artificial flowers. They each bore a lighted taper, and came up along by the seats of the cardinals—went up the steps that led to the papal throne, and there bowing down before his holiness,

\* These girls are educated in a large and wealthy convent, where a certain number of poor children are instructed, either to become nuns, or to support themselves by their industry. Twelve are selected annually for this supposed honour, and receive a certain donation from the cardinals as their dower.

they reverently kissed his foot. A collection was then taken up among the cardinals for their benefit, and the whole ceremony was thus ended. The pope was again put into his chair, and borne on the shoulders of his attendants to his carriage. The streets were filled with carriages, and soldiers, and merry crowds; the air rung with noise and the sound of martial music; every window and balcony was crowded with idle spectators. This is the way in which the pope keeps the sabbath; these are the means he takes to save the thousands that people his territory. Oh what a religion Popery is! I went home sick and sorrowful. I felt as though, in being present at such a scene, I had helped to desecrate the sabbath. I can never feel thankful enough that I was born in a Protestant land. Our countrymen do not appreciate the religious privileges they enjoy."

The services in which the pope is engaged are strongly marked with superstition. In addition to proofs already given, he consecrates many articles, called *Agnus Dei*—images of a lamb impressed on virgin wax mixed with balsam and oil—as sacred amulets, the first year of his pontificate; and afterwards on every seventh year, on the Saturday before Low Sunday, with many ceremonies and prayers. The following description of these charms is from one of the devotional works of the



Papists :—" The spiritual efficacy or virtue of the Agnus Dei, is gathered from the prayer that the church makes use of in the blessing of it : which is to preserve him who carries an Agnus Dei, or any particle of it, about him, from any attempts of his spiritual or temporal enemies, from the dangers of fire, of water, of storms and tempests, of thunder and lightning, and from a sudden and unprovided death. It puts the devils to flight, succours women, takes away the stains of past sins, and furnishes us with new grace for the future, that we may be preserved from all adversities and perils, in life and death, through the cross and merits of the Lamb, who redeemed and washed us in his blood." Such a statement is truly astounding. What says the Bible? That all temporal and spiritual safety and deliverance come from God alone. What says the Romish church? That they are owing to a consecrated piece of wax! What a combination is here of absurdity and impiety.

In the services of the last week of Lent, as celebrated at Rome, the pope is peculiarly conspicuous. The principal function takes place on Palm Sunday, in the papal chapel, commonly called the Sistine, and consists of the mass. It differs from the service of any other Sunday, in the blessing and distributing palm or olive branches, as a commemoration of Christ's entrance

into Jerusalem. A procession is then formed about the Sala Regia, in which these branches are borne, a cardinal priest, according to Picart, chaunting the mass.

The procession begins with the lowest in clerical rank, who move off two by two, rising gradually till bishops, archbishops, and cardinals appear, and at the close of all—for in the Romish church the most distinguished always brings up the rear—the pope meets the view, borne in his chair of state, on men's shoulders, with a crimson canopy over his head.

“The procession,” says an eye-witness, “issued forth into the Sala Borgia, (the hall behind the Sistine chapel,) and marched round it, forming nearly a circle, for by the time the pope had got out, the leaders of the procession had nearly got back again; but they found the gates of the chapel closed against them, and an admittance being demanded, a voice was heard from within, in deep recitation, seemingly inquiring into their business, or claims for entrance there. This was answered by the choristers from the procession, in the hall, and after a chaunted parley of a few minutes, the gates were again opened, and the pope, cardinals, and priests returned to their seats. Then the passion was chaunted, and then a most tiresome long service commenced, in which the usual genuflexions, and tinkling

of little bells, and 'dressings, and undressings, and walking up and coming down the steps of the altar, and bustling about went on, and which terminated at last in the cardinals embracing and kissing each other, which is, I am told, 'the kiss of peace.' The palms are artificial, plaited of straw, or the leaves of dried reeds, so as to resemble the real branches of the palm-tree, when their leaves are plaited, which are used in this manner for this ceremony in Roman Catholic colonies in tropical climates. These artificial palms, however, are topped with some of the real leaves of the palm-tree, brought from the shores of the Gulf of Genoa." Need it be asked whether St. Peter or St. Paul were ever thus carried in pomp and childish show?

On Thursday a singular ceremony takes place, an account of which shall be given on the same authority:—"It is instituted in commemoration of our Saviour's washing the feet of the apostles; but here there were thirteen instead of twelve. The odd one is the representative of the angel that once came to the table of twelve that St. Gregory was serving; and though it is not asserted that the said angel had his feet washed, or indeed did any thing but eat, yet as the pope can hardly do less for him than the rest, he shares in the ablution as well as the repast.

“ The twelve were old priests, but the one who performed the part of the angel was very young. They were all dressed in loose white gowns, with white caps on their heads, and clean woollen stockings, and were seated in a row along the wall, under a canopy. When the pope entered, and took his seat at the top of the room, the whole company of them knelt in their places, turning towards him ; on his hand being extended in benediction, they all rose again and resealed themselves.

“ The splendid garments of the pope were then taken off, and clad in a white linen robe, which he had on under the others, and wearing the bishop’s mitre instead of the tiara, he approached the pilgrims, took from an attendant a silver bucket of water, knelt before the first of them, immersed one foot in the water, put water over it with his hand, and touched it with a square fringed cloth, kissed the leg, and gave the cloth and a sort of white flower, or feather, to the man ; then went on to the next. The whole ceremony was over, I think, in less than two minutes, so rapidly was this act of humility gone through. From thence the pope returned to his throne, put on his robes of white and silver again, and proceeded to the Sala della Tavola, whither we followed, not without extreme difficulty, so immense was the crowd. The thirteen priests were now

seated in a row at the table, which was spread with a variety of dishes, and adorned with a profusion of flowers. The pope gave the blessing, and walking along the side of the table opposite to them, handed each of them bread, then plates, and lastly, cups of wine. They regularly all rose up to receive what he presented; and the pope having gone through the forms of service, and given them his parting benediction, left them to finish their dinner in peace. They carry away what they cannot eat, and receive a small sum of money besides."

Now, what an absurdity is there in this annual ceremony! When Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, he charged them to do to others as he had done to them; but the best obedience would be rendered not to the letter, but the spirit of the command. In eastern countries persons travelling usually on foot, had to pass over dusty spots and scorching sands, having only the soles of their feet covered with sandals, which were fastened with thongs about the ancles. Any one coming from a journey, felt, therefore, that the first thing necessary for his comfort, was the washing of his feet, and hence the performance of this service, or even providing him with water, being the first kind action that was required by a friend or a stranger, came, of course, to designate all the duties of hospitality and brotherly kindness.

Thus Paul mentions the washing of the saints' feet as implying a spirit of true benevolence ; in this sense, then, and in this only, Christ's example is as binding now as it was in the first age of Christianity. The pope has therefore no more authority for his practice on this occasion, than he has for the use of holy water, for being enveloped as he is with clouds of incense, or for many other ceremonies of his degenerate church.

. At the frowns of the pope we need not be alarmed. A worm is a miserable object to excite dread ; and yet on the Thursday of " holy week," one of the cardinals curses all Jews, Turks, and heretics, which latter term includes every Protestant, " by bell, book, and candle." The little bell is rung, the curse is sung from the book, and the lighted tapers thrown down amongst the people. A spectator describes this cursing as follows :—

" The clergy and friars being assembled in the cathedral, and the cross being held up with holy candles of wax fixed thereon, one of the priests in white robes, ascended the pulpit and preached. The bishop then with solemnity pronounced the curse. This form of cursing commenced by declaring that it was ' By the authority of God the Father Almighty, of the blessed Virgin Mary, of St. Peter and Paul, and of the holy saints ;' the excommunicated is then mentioned ; and it proceeds, ' We



curse and ban, commit and deliver to the devil of hell, him or her, whatsoever he or she may be. Excommunicated and accursed may they be, and given body and soul to the devil. Cursed be they in cities, in towns, in fields, in ways, in paths, in houses, out of houses, and all other places, standing, lying, or rising, walking, running, waking, sleeping, eating, drinking, and whatsoever things they do besides. We separate them from the threshold, and from all prayers of the church, from the holy mass, from all sacraments, chapels, and altars, from holy bread and holy water, from all the merits of God's priests and religious men, from all their pardons, privileges, grants, and immunities, which all the holy fathers, the popes of Rome, have granted; and we give them utterly over to the power of the fiend! And let us quench their soul, if they be dead, this night in the pains of hell-fire, as this candle is now quenched and put out,' (and then one of them is put out,) 'and let us pray to God, that if they be alive, their eyes may be put out, as this candle is put out,' (another was then extinguished;) 'and let us pray to God, and to our Lady, and to St. Peter, and St. Paul, and all the holy saints, that all the senses of their bodies may fail them, and that they may have no feeling, as now the light of this candle is gone,' (the third



was then put out,) ‘except they come openly now, and confess their blasphemy, and by repentance, as in them shall lie, make satisfaction unto God, our Lady, St. Peter, and the worshipful company of this cathedral church. And as this cross falleth down, so may they, except they repent, and show themselves.’” Then the cross was allowed to fall down with a loud noise, and the superstitious multitude shouted with fear.\*

This miserable and impious farce is soon followed by the pope’s blessing on all who believe, or profess to believe, his own creed. On Easter day he says mass at the high altar of St. Peter’s, and at its close pronounces his blessing on the multitude in the square below, many of whom are pilgrims from considerable distances. One thing is, however, perfectly clear : he curses some who are objects of the Divine favour ; he blesses others with whom God is angry every day. In each instance he speaks in vain, as it regards *them* ; but in every one there is a record against *him* of presumptuous sin, in the book of God’s remembrance.

It must now be remarked, that the doctrine held by

\* All those included in this curse are described in a papal bull or decree read on this day, entitled “In die Cœnæ Domini.” It includes all who, by themselves or others, under any pretence, occupy, destroy, or detain, any thing belonging to the church of Rome, or any of its rights. The offences specified in this bull can only be absolved by the pope himself.

Roman Catholics, in reference to the pope, is this:—that by the agreement of the fathers and the testimony of tradition, the bishops of Rome are Christ's vicars on the earth, as the successors of St. Peter, who, they affirm, translated his chair from Antioch to Rome, and died holding the office of its bishop. Hence, it is said, the see of Rome is called, in all ages, the see of St. Peter, the chair of St. Peter, and absolutely the see apostolic, and has consequently, from the beginning, exercised authority over all other churches. Here, however, we have assertion instead of fact, and assumption in the place of argument.

It appears from the narrative of the evangelist Matthew, that Jesus asked his disciples, saying, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets." The question then became particular: passing from men in common to his immediate followers, Jesus said, "But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee,

That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church ; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it," Matt. xvi. 13—18. Here then is a foundation for the church of the living God, formed of all true believers in our Lord Jesus Christ ; a foundation so stable and secure, that no devices or efforts of fallen angels or men shall ever subvert it, though they should rally for this object their mightiest energies, and expend on it their concentrated force. Yea more, death and the grave shall be equally impotent. The disciples of Christ may fall beneath the stroke of the last enemy, but others shall successively arise, and triumphing over every adversary, appear as " more than conquerors."

At this point the Romanist claims the dignity of the foundation thus exhibited for the apostle Peter, and therefore his supremacy ; an assumption, however, which is perfectly unwarrantable. It must be so, even on the admission that Christ referred to Peter as the basis of his church. For when the apostle Paul was addressing the Ephesians, he described both Jews and Gentiles as forming one spiritual temple, " built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone," Eph. ii. 20. On him as the centre of union, the cement, and support, the whole building " fitly framed together,"

according to the design of the Supreme Architect, "groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord, an habitation of God through the Spirit." The dignity of the foundation, then, so far from belonging exclusively to Peter, is here divided among the prophets as well as the apostles of our Lord, because in the writings they penned, and the truths they announced, they proclaimed the testimony by the reception of which the Gentile and the Jew alike, became "living stones" of the spiritual edifice. Admitting Peter to the rank of the foundation, he is so only subordinately to the Redeemer, of whom Jehovah says: "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste," Isa. xxviii. 16; and he is so only in common with others, and therefore can claim no superiority over any, much less supremacy over all.

Such, indeed, was clearly the doctrine of the apostle himself, given, too, with the utmost explicitness, under his own hand. Addressing the believers who were scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, he says: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ," 1 Pet. ii. 5. Thus, then, he acknowledges the sure foun-

dation on which the living stones of the church of God are built, in order to the acceptable offerings of its members as a holy priesthood. In connexion with this, he adds the very text just quoted from Isaiah : " Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious : and he that believeth on him," (who is the chief corner stone,) " shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious : but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner," 1 Peter ii. 5, 6.

The declaration of Christ, on which Romanists lay so much stress, may, however, be regarded in another point of view ; and here we consider that the foundation to which Jesus referred was not Peter, but that pointed out by him when he declared the dignity of Christ, by saying, " Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Thus he asserted, that Jesus was the Anointed One ; for the Greek word employed on this occasion, answers to the Hebrew word Messiah, the name by which the Jews always spake of the promised Deliverer ; and also, that Christ sustained a peculiar relation to Jehovah, whom he, at the same time, distinguished from all the idols of the heathen. On the fact of Christ's pre-eminence, to which a merely human

being can never approximate, the efficiency of his mediatorial work is entirely dependent : it is because " God was manifest in the flesh " that " he is able to save to the uttermost," and that " other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

A striking confirmation of this view of Christ's declaration appears in a following verse : for does it say, " Then charged he his disciples that they should " henceforth acknowledge that on Peter the church was to rest, as his supremacy was now explicitly and determinately settled ? No. But, " that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ," because the time for the full publication of his Messiahship had not arrived. In entire accordance with this, it is added : " From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day ;" gradually unfolding, as he did, that amazing and glorious doctrine, of which Peter, in a few words, had just given the summary.

As, then, this passage will not avail the Romanist, whether Peter or our Lord be considered the foundation, he will probably direct us to the promise of Christ, uttered on the same occasion, as investing the apostle



Peter with peculiar dignity : “ I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven : and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven : and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven,” Matt. xvi. 19. The grant of the keys, which is said now to have taken place, is one on which is founded the declaration that there is no salvation out of the church of Rome, because here is the authority to open or to close the kingdom of heaven—a declaration which is absolutely false. For to this it may be replied, that the power thus claimed belongs exclusively to Christ. “ I will come again,” he said to his disciples, “ and receive you unto myself ; that where I am, there ye may be also,” John xiv. 3. He that has “ the keys of hell and of death”—he that “ openeth, and no man shutteth, and shutteth, and no man openeth,” is not the pope—he is not Peter, but the only and exalted Redeemer. The fact is, that by the phrase “ the kingdom of heaven,” which is very frequently employed, that new dispensation is intended which Christ came expressly to establish, and of which so many illustrations were furnished in parables. It is observable, that this grant of the figurative keys was not immediate, it was afterwards to be made ; and this was done when Peter stood forth on the day of Pentecost as the herald of mercy to the



thousands assembled, and when having thus thrown open the door of Christ's kingdom to the Jews, he performed the same act for the Gentiles in his visit to Cornelius. The promise was a prediction that he would be selected as the first instrument in the offer of spiritual blessings "without money and without price:" at the appointed time his trust was discharged, and its repetition is absolutely impossible.

That nothing which occurred on this occasion, gave supremacy to Peter, is manifest also, from other circumstances. But a short time afterwards, the disciples came unto Jesus, saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" And was the reply "Peter?" No: on the contrary, Jesus called a little child to him, and set him in the midst of them, and said unto them, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven," Matt. xviii. 1, 3:—thus inculcating the absolute necessity of true humility to the enjoyment of the blessings he came to bestow. Still further, he gave the apostles equal power, employing the same terms, with the exception that he does not expressly use the figure of the keys: "Verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall

be loosed in heaven," Matt. xviii. 18. All had, therefore, in the proclamation of Divine truth, to state the obligations which were in full force, and those which had become void; that which it was lawful to do, and that which could not be done without sin.

The supremacy of Peter, it may be confidently affirmed, was not acknowledged by his contemporaries. Paul was manifestly ignorant of it when he says, that *he* was "not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles," 2 Cor. xi. 5. As certainly did he not acknowledge Peter's superiority when at Antioch; he "withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed" for symbolizing with the Jews, from an unmanly fear of certain persons who had come from Jerusalem, Gal. ii. 11. Equally clear is it, that when the apostles and elders were assembled on a memorable occasion in that city, he was not in dominion as a sovereign ruler; for though he delivered the first address which is recorded, it is expressly stated that the final decision was arrived at by the sentence of the apostle James, and by him the prohibitions sent forth were distinctly given, Acts xv. 6—21. Nor can it be forgotten, that when Peter had preached to Cornelius, the brethren at Jerusalem, so far from assuming that all must be right, demanded an account and a justification of his conduct, Acts xi. 1, 2.

It will now be evident, that the Scriptures give no support to the imagination, that Peter had any authority beyond that of the other apostles of our Lord; it therefore only remains to inquire, Whether there is any proof that he was bishop of Rome? It is reported by some ancient writers, but who did not live till long after his death, and firmly asserted by Papists, that he was first bishop of Antioch, and afterwards removed to Rome, where he continued for five and twenty years, until his martyrdom. It is customary to say at the installation of a pope, "Holy Father, thou wilt not see the years of Peter;" and as those who are raised to this rank are commonly advanced in life, few pontiffs have reigned for so long a period.

Here, however, it is worthy of special remark, that the authority given by our Lord to Peter, was that of an apostle, not that of a bishop. The indispensable qualification for this office, was the actual beholding Christ in the flesh—a fact which tended to authenticate the testimony of those called to this dignity, and which clearly proves that it could be held for only a certain time. In addition to this limitation as to time, there was another of a local character; for while an apostle went hither and thither preaching the gospel, as one of the "witnesses to Christ in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in

Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth," a bishop had the oversight of some part of the Christian church. The former was employed in the first planting of the vineyard, the latter in its continued culture, and in gathering its full ripe clusters. The one discharged the functions of an extraordinary messenger "at the beginning of the gospel," the other was employed in the ordinary administration of ecclesiastical affairs. To argue, therefore, from the apostle to the bishop, betrays a want of discrimination, and what is more, of all authority.

Equally obvious is it that no satisfactory evidence exists that Peter was ever bishop of Rome. The oldest writer, who is said to have asserted it, lived a hundred years after the death of that apostle. Yet assuredly had this office been sustained, we should have found some trace of it in the New Testament. It is, however, a singular fact, that not a word in reference to it is to be had from Peter himself, or from his companions, James, Luke, Jude, John, or Paul. The latter wrote an epistle to the church at Rome, and from that city he addressed others to the churches of Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, and Colosse, to his son Timothy, and to his friend Philemon. In some epistles he mentions many persons, but Peter, though pretended to have been bishop of

Rome, is entirely overlooked. In reference to his first appearance before Nero, the great apostle of the Gentiles says, "No man stood by me." Are not these facts conclusive, then, as to Peter not being resident at Rome? Rome being the seat of government when the priesthood began to exercise power, the chief priest of Rome naturally claimed pre-eminence, but this was several years after Peter; and when his spirit no longer influenced the bishops of that city.

We may trace the power of popes directly to paganism. Every gradation of authority prevailed among the priests of antiquity. In Rome, especially, there was an ascent from the mere noviciate, to the college of pontiffs, and to the Pontifex Maximus. On that college it devolved to exercise a general superintendence over the national worship; while the title of the highest order the pagan emperors were proud to appropriate. Thus the way was made for a college of cardinals, and a sovereign pontiff bearing another name.

## LETTER VI.

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COMPARISON OF POPERY WITH HEATHENISM—ITS CHURCHES—  
ALTARS—INCENSE—HOLY WATER—VOTIVE OFFERINGS—  
DRESSES—CHAUNTS, AND FESTIVALS.

THE ancient Romans had little temples or altars, decked with flowers, or whose statues at least, coarsely carved with wood or stone, were placed at convenient distances in the public ways for travellers, who used to step aside to pay their devotions at these rural shrines, and entreat a safe and prosperous journey. In Italy these altars still appear ; persons may be seen bending before them, and none ever presume to pass without performing some act of reverence.

A traveller says :—“ As I descended from the Alps, I was admonished of my entrance into Italy, by a little chapel to the Madonna, built upon a rock by the road side, and from that time till I repassed this chain of mountains, I received almost hourly proof that I was

wandering amongst the descendants of that people which is described by Cicero, (but he, be it remembered, spake as a pagan,) to have been the most religious of mankind. Though the mixture of religion with all the common events of life is any thing but an error, yet I could not avoid regretting that, like their heathen ancestors, the modern Italians had supplied the place of one great Master mover, by a countless host of inferior agents."

Other causes of lamentation may also operate. The rites and pageantry by which the Greeks and Romans attempted to honour their deities, might indeed be observed at an earlier period, with slight modifications, as parts of the established worship of the church of Rome. It was pleaded that they were necessary, to retain in the profession of Christianity, the half-converted multitude, and also to augment their number. "Hence it happened," says Mosheim, "that in these times the religion of the Greeks and Romans differed very little, in its external appearance, from that of the Christians. They had both a pompous and most splendid ritual, gorgeous robes, mitres, tiaras, wax tapers, crosiers, processions, lustrations, images, gold and silver vases; and many such circumstances of pageantry were equally to be seen in the heathen temples and the



Christian churches. The principal difference was, in fact, that instead of referring to the imaginary deities hitherto worshipped, their objects were angels, saints, and martyrs ; thus the very spirit of heathenism breathed in what was called Christianity."

Popery, indeed, meets the view as a slightly modified paganism. Heathen temples, without alteration, became the scenes of professedly Christian worship. Thus, in the ecclesiastical edifices of Rome, the constituent and essential parts remain the same as they were at the period of their erection, which, in the case of some few, was in the era of Constantine, and of others in that of his sons, or their immediate successors. They were, in fact, almost the only objects attended to and respected during the long ages of barbarism.

The finest heathen temple now extant is the Pantheon, or Rotunda, which, as the inscription over the portico states, "having been impiously dedicated of old by Agrippa, to Jove and all the gods, was piously reconsecrated by pope Boniface iv. to the blessed Virgin and all the saints." Altered only in this respect, it serves as exactly for the popish, as it did aforetime for the pagan worship. As, then, every one might discover and address himself to the god of his country ; so now, each one chooses the patron he prefers, and hence

different services may be observed going on at the same time, at different altars, with distinct congregations around them, according to the respective inclinations of those assembled.

Other cases of the kind might easily be given. Thus, there was a spot on which it was supposed Romulus was suckled by the wolf, and the heathens, having raised him to the rank of a god, built him a temple; and hither nurses and mothers were accustomed to resort with sickly infants, in the confidence of relief or cure, from the notion that he was singularly favourable to the safety and health of young children. Now, this piece of heathenism was thought too good to be relinquished when the temple of Romulus was made a church. The worship of the founder of Rome was merely transferred to St. Theodorus; and before his altar mothers and nurses appear with the same expectations. The little temple of Vesta, near the Tyber, is now possessed by the Madonna of the sun; that of Fortuna Virilis, by Mary the Egyptian; that of Saturn, by St. Adrian; and that of Antonine the godly, by Laurence the saint. And, to mention only one more fact, at Rome there were formerly two statues of Jupiter Capitolinus, one of stone, the other of bronze. On a profession of Christianity succeeding to that of heathen-

ism, they placed a head of St. Peter on the body of the former, and gave him new hands, in one of which they placed a key: they then melted the latter, (the metal statue,) and recast it after the fashion of that of stone. Slight, indeed, was the alteration, except in name; and the worship of St. Peter followed that of Jupiter!

Every one of the churches and chapels of Popery will remind the intelligent spectator of ancient heathens. A considerable space where the priest and his attendants officiate, for instance, is separated from the rest, either by its elevation, or a railing of wood, stone, brass, or iron, and called the sanctuary. Here stands the altar, to which there is an ascent, according to canon law, by three steps, and above it is the tabernacle, which will be hereafter described. At the sides of it are wax candles, inserted in large columns of tin, painted white, and forced upwards by means of a spring. The lights so freely used in Romish ceremonies remind us of many passages in pagan writers, where their perpetual lamps and candles are described as continually burning before the altars and statues of their deities. The Egyptians are said to have first introduced the use of lights or lamps in their temples; and Herodotus mentions an annual festival which they celebrated, called, from the principal part of the ceremony, "The lighting up of

candles." In the festival of Ceres, a profusion of tapers was thought peculiarly acceptable to the goddess ; and it was also usual to dedicate to her candles or torches of enormous size ; doubtless as emblems of the pines she is said to have plucked up and lighted at Etna, when she traversed Sicily in search of her daughter Proserpine.

Middleton describes the face of the image of the Virgin at Loretto, as being black as a negro's, so that it might be rather taken for the representation of an infernal deity, than for what it is impiously styled, "The queen of heaven." But he soon recollected that its complexion likened it more exactly to the idols of heathenism, which are said to have been black with the perpetual smoke of lamps and incense.

The relative situation of the image and the altar in former times, clearly appears from a painting found at Pompeii. It represents a sacrifice to Bacchus, in front of whose statue an altar is placed, and that so much below him, as that he may receive all the odour of the offering. In incense, the Romish priests are still prodigal. With a tact only to be acquired by practice, they throw up the censer repeatedly before the crucifix, supplying it from time to time from a vessel borne for that purpose by an acolyte, while the cloud ascends

before the image, as if it were conscious of the offerings of its infatuated votaries.

The origin of the ceremony is beyond dispute. But when Middleton traced the altars of the Romanists to those of the pagans, it is likely that his antagonist, as a papist, would prefer deriving them from the altar of incense in the Jewish temple ; but is it not evident, that the Mosaic dispensation was intended as “a shadow of good things to come,” and that while it lasted, Jehovah would not have approved of any other altar ? To deny this would be to affirm that offerings made at Bethel and at Dan were not idolatrous, and thus to reject the most explicit testimony of Divine inspiration. Besides, as the writer just mentioned says to his opponent, “Was there ever a temple in the world not strictly heathenish, in which there were several altars all smoking with incense within one view, and at one and the same time ? It is certain that he must answer in the negative ; yet it is equally so that there were such temples in pagan Rome, and that there are as many still in Christian, that is, *professedly* Christian Rome. And since there never was an example of it but what was paganish before the times of Popery, how is it possible that it could be derived to them from any other source ? Or, when we see so exact a resemblance in the

copy, how can there be any doubt about the original?" It is remarkable, that in all the old sculptures of heathen sacrifices may be seen a boy, in a habit considered sacred, attending the priest, and bearing a small box of incense ; just as in the services of the Romish church now the priest is accompanied by one, having a similar utensil, of which the same use is made.

We may proceed, then, to another point of resemblance. It is maintained by Romanists, for example, that when water, in which a little salt has been mingled, is blessed by the priest, it has great efficacy ; and hence it is very frequently employed. The visitants of their ecclesiastical edifices will not fail to notice a recess provided for it at each door ; so that persons on entering and returning, may dip a finger in it, and then make the sign of the cross, by applying the finger to the forehead, the chest, and the right and left shoulders. Some curious circumstances in connexion with this practice may also be frequently observed.

A girl of ten or twelve years of age, for instance, may perhaps be seen attempting to make the usual sign on a little child just beginning to walk, who tries to avoid every touch, while she is still more anxious that there should be no failure. Or, three or four women may reach the font together, when one will dip in her hand,



and then hastily touch the hands of the rest, by which the wished-for object appears to them to be gained. Or, there may be a display of *ingenuity* like the following which fell under my observation, and which, however strange it may seem to those who have not crossed the Channel, may often be witnessed by those who have.

The continental towns, it may be remarked, contain ordinarily some large schools, for gratuitous instruction ; those for girls being under the care of some order of nuns, while those for boys are conducted by monks, or, as they are styled, "Christian Brothers." All of these, amounting to some hundreds, attend, of course, the services of the Romish church, and, as it might be expected, that the application of holy water to each one of these as they pass the font to kneel before the high altar, would occupy a considerable time ; a more summary process is adopted. A child may be observed walking at the head of its school, (which in long procession advances to the church,) provided with a brush, the shape of which, however, seems not to be material. On this one it devolves to enter the edifice first, to dip the brush in the holy water, and then to hold it up ; and thus, as the one I observed was round, like that used for cleaning bottles, many points were presented, and several children could touch it at the



same moment. After all, as in the case of other forms, the practice has greatly degenerated, and the merest attempt is often deemed sufficient.

Now, so notoriously was this application of water the practice of heathens, that Lacerda, the Jesuit, does not hesitate to avow it when he says, "Hence was derived the custom of our holy church to provide purifying or holy water at the entrance of the churches." The fact is, that as the Pagan temple became, in many instances, the scene of nominally Christian worship, those who engaged in it appropriated many things belonging to idolaters. Thus while within was found all the furniture of an edifice previously devoted to the worship of idols, the vessel of water in which salt was infused, as it is to the present day, remained at the door.

The sprinkling of water by means of a brush at the commencement of celebrating mass, was another part of heathen observances. The form of the sprinkling brush, which is much the same as that now used by priests, may be seen in ancient coins and bas-reliefs, wherever the emblems of a pagan priesthood appear. One use of this instrument is too remarkable to be overlooked. There is a yearly festival at Rome especially devoted to the blessing or purifying of horses, asses, and other animals; and on the appointed day in

the month of January, the inhabitants of the city and neighbourhood send theirs, decked with ribands, to the convent of St. Anthony, near the church of St. Mary the Great, to pass through this ceremony. At the church door the priest appears, and with his brush sprinkles each animal as it is presented to him, whether a horse, mule, ass, ox, cow, sheep, goat, or dog, dipping his brush from time to time in a huge bucket of holy water that stands near, taking off his skull-cap, and muttering in Latin that these animals are freed from evil through the intercession of the blessed St. Anthony, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost !

One party, at least, derives advantage from the ceremony ; for the rider or driver of the animal always gives some piece of money, larger or smaller according to his means, and receives an engraving of St. Anthony and a little metallic cross. Well-dressed people, in very handsome equipages, attended by outriders in splendid liveries, may also be noticed driving up and sitting uncovered, till the blessing, as it is called, is given. Then, having contributed according to their pleasure, they drive off, and make way for others.

One traveller observed on this occasion a countryman, whose beast having received the holy water, set off

from the church-door at a gallop, but had scarcely gone a hundred yards before the ungainly animal tumbled down with him, and over its head he rolled in the dust. He soon however arose, and so did the horse, without either seeming to have sustained much injury. The priest looked on, and though his blessing had failed, he was not out of countenance ; while some of the by-standers said that but for it, the horse and his rider might have broken their necks.

Some friends of mine witnessed another application of water accounted holy, during a transient visit to Liege not long since. The whole district of the city in which was the church of St. Jacques, appeared in motion ; numbers were flocking thither from all quarters ; even infants were taken in their cots, and three generations might be seen in company. As the strangers approached the church many were leaving it, yet the edifice was full. About fifty persons at a time knelt at the rails of an altar, before which stood a priest, who hastily touched the eyes of each one with "the eye of St. Odilia," inclosed under glass in a gold case. This relic was attached to his finger ; it was wiped after each application with a cloth, and was held to every person to kiss. The object would not easily be guessed : the *ostensible* one is, that diseased eyes may be cured, and sound

ones preserved, an advantage confined to one day in the year—the festival of the saint. The *real* object is, doubtless, associated with the money-box, borne by the attendant acolyte, into which each one puts a coin. Others were employed at the west end of the church in bringing buckets of water from the ground-floor of the tower, and selling it in tumblers and bottles. A woman, on being asked what this meant, replied, that it was some of “the blessed water of St. Odilia, which was good for the eyes, and also for the purification of the stomach!”

To employ the language of the Rev. Dr. O’Croly, once a Romanist: “What a multitude of odd ceremonies is connected with the use of holy water! It is astonishing what virtue is ascribed to this consecrated element! Nothing can be blessed or hallowed without it; neither candles, nor new fruits, nor new-laid eggs, nor ships, nor dwelling-houses, nor churches, nor bells, nor sacerdotal vestments. It is used in all the sacraments, before mass and after mass, and at the churching of women. Nothing, in short, can be done without holy water. Even the butter-churn is sprinkled with it before the churning commences, that the cream may work the better. It purifies the air, heals distempers, cleanses the soul, expels Satan and his imps

from haunted houses, and introduces the Holy Ghost as an inmate in their stead. It is generally believed that the holy water blessed at Easter and Christmas possesses superior virtue; on which account, several tubs or barrels full must be blessed on these occasions, in order to supply the increased demand." What a combination is here of ignorance, superstition, and blasphemy!

In the churches of the continent, the traveller may frequently observe, at the altar of the Virgin, many small waxen models of arms, legs, teeth, and other parts of the body, which had been hung up as offerings in her honour, for cures supposed to have been received through her agency. And here, as clearly as in the cases already mentioned, is a relic of former days. After referring to the practice of the ancients, Polydore Virgil says:—"In the same manner do we now offer up in our churches little images of wax, and as oft as any part of the body is hurt, as the hand or foot, we presently make a vow to God, or one of his saints, to whom, on our recovery, we make an offering of that foot or hand in wax. Which custom is now come to that extravagance, that we do the same thing for our cat the which we do for ourselves, and make offering for our oxen, horses, sheep; where a scrupulous man will

question whether in this we imitate the religion or superstition of our ancestors."

The sanctuary of a Romish church already referred to, is generally surrounded by windows adorned with stained glass, on which are representations of the Saviour, the Virgin Mary, saints, and angels, with various devices. Sometimes other paintings are seen through open work in front of the altar, and around the walls of the edifice paintings and statues are generally placed. It is usual to represent the heads of the persons thus exhibited as surrounded with glory, and this formerly encircled the statues of heathen gods. Thus the halo of light which was given to Apollo, or Fortuna, or Pallas, is transferred to Peter, or Paul, or Francis; and the Virgin, just like Diana of old, is often represented with the crescent, the emblem of chastity.

To relieve the transition from song to ordinary reading, and also to assist the common tone of voice in large churches, the ancients introduced a few modulations into the prayers and lectures. These, which raised and sustained the voice, extended its reach, and softened its cadences, were taken from the different species of Roman declamations, and still vary in number and solemnity according to the importance and nature of the lecture. Pope Gregory the Great collected the chaunt or music



used by the Papal choir into a body, and gave it the form in which it now appears. In the lessons and epistles, the interrogations, exclamations and periods only, are marked by a corresponding rise or fall: the gospel has its variations more numerous and dignified: and the opening of the mass is borrowed, it is supposed, from the stately accents of Roman tragedy. The chaunt of the Psalms is composed of Lydian, Phrygian, and other Greek and Roman tunes, without many notes, but with a sufficient inflection to render them either soft and plaintive, or bold and animating.

In the sacristy of the chapel of an English monastery, and of all others of the Romish church, there is a great variety of garments. Among the vestments here arranged, are *amices*, each one being a square of fine cambric cloth, to be thrown over the shoulders, and made to hide the waistcoat and other upper garments;—*albs*, long white dresses of fine Irish cloth or calico, somewhat in the form of a shirt, tied at the top, reaching down to the feet, and ornamented with network or lace;—*girdles* of fine cord, with tassels to be bound on the alb and around the waist;—*stoles*, of silk or velvet, or gold or silver tissue, worn on the shoulders of a priest, and crossed in front, but worn by a deacon on one shoulder, and hanging by the side;—*maniples*, of



the same material, worn on the arm ;—*chasibules*, the upper vestments of priests, made of silk or velvet, or gold or silver tissue, often richly embossed and adorned with precious stones ;—*dalmatics* resembling in form the chasibule of the priest, except in having wings on the shoulders formed of the same materials as that part of his attire ; these are the upper garments of the deacon when assisting in the celebration of mass ;—*tuncis*, the same in shape, size, and quality, as the dalmatics worn by the sub-deacon ;—*veils*, or broad and long scarfs worn across the shoulders when assisting in high mass, and serving to hide the paten in the early part of its celebration ;—*cofes*, which are large, rich, and highly ornamented vestments, somewhat in the form of a travelling cloak, and intended to cover the whole of the other vestments, but only at certain services ;—*surplices*, worn by priests and deacons when they preach or expound ; by acolytes, or clerks, by the thurifer, or incense-bearer, and also by those engaged in carrying torches ;—*palls*, to cover the chalice when the wine is consecrated ;—*corporals*, to spread on the altar-cloth to catch any particles of the broken wafer, or drops of the spilt wine, to be touched by those only who have received sub-deacon's orders, and those of higher rank ;—and *munditories*, of fine linen, employed to cleanse the chalice, the use of which is equally limited.

White vestments, or those of gold or silver, always regarded as white, are used in all the feasts of the Virgin; on such feasts as Easter, Pentecost, and Corpus Christi, and on all feasts of virgins that were not martyrs; red vestments are worn on all feasts of apostles and martyrs; green on most sabbaths from Pentecost to Advent; purple on penitential occasions, as the weeks of that season and of Lent; and black on Good Friday, and in offices for the dead. All persons engaged at these times wear robes or garments of the same colour.

In the superstition that prevails, many of these vestments are considered as having some mystic signification. The amice is put over the shoulders of the priest, and is called by St. Bonaventure, with the Greeks, *hummeale*, a covering for the shoulders. The name amice is from the Latin word *amictus*, or covered. Being clean and white, it signifies, according to Rebanus, the purity and cleanness of heart with which the priest ought to go to the holy altar, and represents the linen with which the Jews blindfolded our Saviour, saying in derision, "Prophecy unto us, O Christ! who is it that smote thee?" The albe, or alba, which signifies white, or whiteness, denotes, it is said, chastity, and is a memento to the priest of the unspotted purity of life and manners with which he ought to be adorned. Other

parts of the dress are considered equally emblematical. Thus Romanists say the girdle represents the cords with which Christ was bound when seized by the Jews, and signifies the cords of love and duty with which all, especially priests, ought to be close bound to the service of God. The mantle represents also the cords in the binding of the Saviour. Before the priest puts it on his left arm, he kisses the cross which is in the middle of it, as offering himself to attend the Saviour in his passion, with a desire to suffer with him. What shall be said of such a dress, when appearing to plead solemnly with the Most High for a sinful people? It would be more suitable and in place at a masquerade or fancy ball! In fact, the ordinary costume of the Romish priesthood is pagan. In all heathen rites, white was considered as having a favourable influence on the gods; and the prayer of a suppliant so clothed was held to have a powerful claim on the bounty of Heaven. In the chamber of the Young Apollo in the Vatican, is a bas-relief, representing a priest of Isis. A cowl covers the back of his head, which is shaven in front, and a loose cloak descends to his knees. The materials, however, are not the same: the dress of the priests has always been of linen, that of monks of wool. Even the tonsure, the cutting off a portion of the hair

from the crown of the head, considered by Romanists a special distinction of the priesthood, is of heathen origin. "It is clear," says Jerome, "that we ought not to be seen with our heads shaven, like the priests and worshippers of Isis and Serapis." And yet now they glory in their shame!

The stola, called originally orarium, or sudarium, was a long stripe of linen, worn round the neck by persons of distinction, and particularly magistrates or public speakers. It was intended, as its primitive name imports, for the same purpose as a handkerchief. The manipular, or mappula, was a handkerchief to replace the stola, when the latter, in process of time, had become merely an ornament. The upper vestment, sometimes called cassibulum, or planeta, was originally a garment of a circular form, with an opening in the centre for the head, so that when put on, it hung down to the ground on all sides, and entirely covered the body. It is only used in the mass; and on other occasions the bishop or priest who presides, wears the cope, the ancient toga.

But without entering into further detail, it may be remarked, that the doorways of all the Italian churches are closed with a heavy curtain, exactly like those of ancient temples. Attention to the services

which take place in such edifices is not usually very profound. The entrance of a stranger into a church in Spain during mass is said always to create a sensation : a hundred eyes may at any time be withdrawn from the contemplation either of a preacher or an image, by the slightest possible cause. Mr. Latrobe says of the city of Mexico : “ The trample of thousands of feet, the march of stately and interminable processions, and the hum and clamour of innumerable voices filled the ear ; both in the ordinary tones of conversation, and exerted to the utmost pitch.” To this, however, he adds, “ You may further understand that the interior of the churches were no more the theatre of silence than the streets without, when I tell you, that, in addition to the incessant stream of worshippers which poured along their pavement from one door to another the livelong day—in many of them, waltzes, boleros, and polonaises, from harpsichord or organ, were the accompaniment of the hasty devotion of the passing multitudes.”

Referring to the resemblance between Popery and heathenism, a gentleman who visited Italy in 1825, says : “ This idea struck me most forcibly, on going to see a *fiesta* which is held at a little village at the foot of Mount Vesuvius. It is the feast of the Madonna del Arco—a *madonna* (or image of the Virgin) celebrated throughout

the kingdom of Naples for the miracles she is said to have performed; in memory of which miracles the church is filled with representations in painting, wood, or in wax, of all accidents and deformities that can disfigure the human frame; all of which, they say, have been cured by the miraculous power of this wonderful Virgin. In the intervals of the masses that are said by the priests, the people go down on their knees, and placing their tongues on the floor proceed in this attitude from the church-door to the altar, licking the dust all the way. By the time they are arrived before the Virgin, they are completely exhausted. They remain, however, on their knees, (their tongues and their noses blackened with filth,) till they have got through a certain number of prayers, and then leave the church with the full assurance of having obtained the favour of the madonna, and having obtained indulgence from many years of purgatory.

“Their throats are then cleansed in the village with abundant libations of wine, their heads are decorated with oak-leaves, and bunches of peeled nuts, that are made to hang like grapes about their hair, they are placed upon donkeys, and carried home to Naples, singing drunken songs in praise of Madonna del Arco, who heals all diseases, redresses all wrongs, and fulfils to the



utmost the desires of all her votaries. Such a mixture of filth and piety, drunkenness and devotion, must have had its origin in the ancient Bacchanalian orgies, of which it is a most lively and animated illustration." What, then, is Popery? It is not Christianity—it is paganism under another name !

There is only one more fact of the same kind to which allusion shall now be made. As the cities of Greece opened an asylum for fugitives from all other nations, Romulus followed their example, and this has been imitated by the church of Rome. Should it, however, be supposed that a precedent for this practice is found in the building of cities of refuge under the law, it may be remarked, that Jehovah was, in a sense altogether peculiar, the King of the Jewish people ; that the former dispensation is ended ; and that no such arrangement is made under the Christian economy. And that the establishment of the city of refuge was only to protect the person who had undesignedly caused the death of another, from the rash and hasty vengeance of the next of kin. The deliberate murderer was not sheltered, but sent without delay to trial and punishment. On the contrary, the popish sanctuary is a place of refuge for criminals of the blackest die, and those guilty of every sort of crime ; the murderer and the



robber are there protected from justice, nay, sheltered even from inquiry into their crimes.

The Romish church, as in other cases, has improved in the present instance on the practice of heathens. The old republic had but one asylum, but in the single city of Rome there were hundreds; and when the sanctuary of ancient Rome was proved to be fruitful in evil, it was enclosed, and all access prevented; but the refuges of Popery stand constantly open to shelter criminals. In Italy assassination has long been common; and one cause of its frequency appears in the defence thus offered by its churches. On the criminality of thus affording a stimulus to such evils, by shielding its perpetrators, it is unnecessary to expatiate. Is it not expressly contradicting the declaration of Scripture, "Thou shalt not kill?" Exod. xx. 13.

## LETTER VII.

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THE DOCTRINE OF VENIAL AND MORTAL SIN—CONFESSION—DIS-  
PENSATIONS — PENANCE—PILGRIMAGES—RELICS—THEIR TRUE  
CHARACTER.

THE Romish church divides the sins of its members into two classes—the venial, and the mortal; those which are “very pardonable,” and those which are not forgiven. Now, it is obvious, that all offences against God are not of equal turpitude. The man who takes away the life of another is manifestly chargeable with greater guilt than he who is convicted only of fraud; and as responsibility is proportionate to privilege, so a murderer in a land like ours, sins more against light and knowledge, than the savage who imbrues his hands in his brother’s blood. Still it may be affirmed, that with this acknowledged gradation in guilt, the Scriptures know nothing of the distinction made by the church of Rome.

An act in itself inconsiderable, be it observed, may

furnish a clear indication of the existing state of feeling. As the motion of a leaf or a feather shows the direction of the wind as certainly as the waving branches of an oak, or the swelling sails of the mariner, so there are stern looks and cold words which manifest sinful anger, as fully as if that feeling vented itself in rancorous abuse, or in deeds of violence. Just so, when Miriam murmured against her brother, when Lot's wife looked back on Sodom, and when Eve stretched forth her hand, and took of the fruit of the forbidden tree, there was in each of these acts a full demonstration of that carnality of mind which is enmity against God. For what says our Lord? "He that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much," Luke xvi. 10. According to this rule, sin is not so much a matter of product, as of principle; it is to be estimated rather according to the disposition than the results of its exercise. But theft, according to the Romish church, is only a mortal sin when the thing stolen is of considerable value; yet no extenuation is allowed by the Scripture of what men call "little sins." The flaming sword of God's law is placed at the very point where the right and the wrong separate. A broad line of demarcation intervenes between what we may do, and what we may not do; and we pass through at our peril. Christ addresses the

man who has only just planted his foot on the forbidden ground, in the same terms as him who has advanced to its utmost limit, because he ought not to be there at all : principle was surrendered in passing the barrier, and when this was gone, the security against any further trespass, however great, was removed.

Accordingly the apostle James says, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all," Jas. ii. 10 ; and he does so, because he who transgresses any one command acts in direct opposition to the principle of all true obedience, and discovers, by so doing, a state of feeling which would lead to the violation of any or every command, were temptation presented, and opportunity afforded. He transgresses the whole law in disposition, if not in act. Though he does not violate it in every instance, the restraint arises from an inferior and base motive, and not from a sense of Divine authority : a due regard to which would have effectually prevented the first offence.

Every sin is inimical to the character and government of God. It strikes at Jehovah as much as if it neither wronged the soul of the transgressor, nor, to the injury of his neighbour, destroyed much good. The confession of David is suited to every sinner : "Against thee, O Lord, against thee only, have I sinned, and done this

evil in thy sight." For sin—every species and degree of sin—is enmity against God, against his attributes, his dispensations, his purposes. Sin vilifies the Divine wisdom, hates the Divine holiness, abuses the Divine goodness, denies the Divine justice, insults the Divine omniscience, trifles with the Divine mercy, dares the Divine power, and, were it possible, would depose the Creator, Upholder, and Ruler of all things, from the throne of the universe.

Can we wonder, then, at the declaration, that "the wages of sin," not of *mortal* sin, as the Romanists, by an unwarrantable assumption, would make it—but, "the wages of sin is death?" Rom. vi. 23. Again, we may read, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," Ezek. xviii. 4, and "Cursed is every one that continueth not in *all* things which are written in the book of the law to do them," Gal. iii. 10. And thus, while some speak of *venial* sins, be it ours to remember that none are so, but that every sin, however estimated by men, renders the transgressor justly liable to eternal punishment.

Another topic for consideration is that of confession. The structure called a "confessional," cannot fail to attract the notice of the visitants of the Romish continental churches. It is a sort of lofty closet, opening in front by a latticed door having a curtain inside, in

which a priest may take his seat, with a wing on either side, in which a person, kneeling on a step, may whisper through a wooden grating into his ear whatever he may intend to confess. Such closets are commonly ranged along the sides of the Popish churches, and frequently bear on them the names of the confessors to whom they are appropriated. In St. Peter's, at Rome, there are confessionals for every living language. Spaniards and Portuguese, French and English, Germans and Dutch, Hungarians and Swedes, Greeks and Armenians, all find priests ready to listen to their tale of sin.

I shall not easily forget the first time of seeing a confessional in use. As the shades of a summer's evening were deepening, the sounds of the organ induced me to enter a church in France, dedicated to St. Joseph ; but in a few minutes vespers were ended, and immediately after I observed one of the priests who had officiated, unlock the door, and enter his confessional. The two wings were instantly occupied ; one by a female wearing a thick black veil, the other by a person of the opposite sex ; but it is most usual for only one person at a time to approach the confessional.

According to the requirement of the Romish church, the person confessing says, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen ;

pray, father, give me your blessing ;” at the same time making the sign of the cross, in the usual way, by touching with the forefinger of the right hand, the forehead, the breast, and the right and left shoulders. The person confessing then proceeds, “ I confess to Almighty God, to the blessed Mary, ever virgin, to blessed Michael the archangel, to blessed John the Baptist, to the holy apostles Peter and Paul, and to all the saints, that I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word, and deed, through my fault, my grievous fault ;” here he or she smites repeatedly on the breast. The personal confession, mentioning the particulars of the sins by which the conscience is burdened, then follows : “ For these, and all other of my sins, which I cannot now call to mind, I feel heartily sorry, and humbly beg pardon of Almighty God, and penance and absolution of you, my ghostly father ; and therefore I beseech the blessed Mary, ever virgin, the blessed Michael the archangel, the blessed John the Baptist, the holy apostles Peter and Paul, and all the saints, to pray to the Lord our God for me.”

A considerable time elapsed before the female referred to returned from the confessional to one of the chairs of the church—the churches of the continent not being pewed, but provided with chairs, which serve either for



sitting or kneeling—where she recited some prayers, probably by the direction of her “ghostly father.” Shortly after, the occupant of the opposite niche of the confessional rose from his knees ; and in a few seconds, the priest having issued from his closet, proceeded to the steps of the altar, where I overheard him repeat a Latin prayer, at the close of which he left the church.

The Romish church allows of no exception to the practice of confession ; from the humblest of its members to the pope himself, all are considered as laid under solemn obligation to its observance. Yet to this service there are most serious and weighty objections. The works designed to assist those who are about to confess, are far more likely to promote the pollution of the mind than its purity. Such, too, is notoriously the effect of the questions of confessors, and many well-authenticated facts show, that by these services offences were first suggested.

It is therefore needless to say, that the word of God does not sanction such a practice, were not the contrary boldly asserted. But when Romanists quote the charge of the apostle James, “ Confess your faults one to another,” Jas. v. 6, or the declaration of St. John, that “ if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins,” 1 John i. 9, it may be replied, that the former passage refers exclusively to a

mutual duty, and the latter to that of the penitent sinner towards Him who is "ready to pardon." To the priest, and still less to the power of absolving or forgiving sin, which he claims by virtue of his office, there is not the slightest possible allusion. Nowhere in the Scriptures do we find any description of authority to receive confession, or a solitary instance of its assertion or exercise.

As might naturally be expected, it becomes the parent of many evils. The effect of confession in early life is to repress the native ardour of the mind, to check the feelings which might be lawfully indulged, and to call forth many scruples as to things which are indifferent and trivial. One individual, reclaimed from the errors of the Romish church, states, that a draught of milk taken on the morning of Ash Wednesday, occasioned him much distress, and that this mere inadvertence formed the burden of his next confession. Idle words and ceremonial omissions commonly make up the amount of such youthful acknowledgments, while the hardened sinner conceals his real guilt, if he is at heart an infidel; or, if he is enthralled by a superstitious belief in the power of the priest, he tells all, and gathers encouragement to repeat his crime by the certainty of absolution and of security.

One who has described his release from the bondage

of the Romish church, mentions his visit to a confessional. He bowed at the knee of the confessor to whom he repaired, but he was harshly ordered to kneel at a chair, and here he related his catalogue of sins, in his view chiefly venial, but in which there appeared occasionally one that was mortal. At the close of it, after another display of caprice on the part of the priest, he was enjoined to abstain from breakfast every morning until his next visit.

Not thinking that the prohibition extended to the morning of Christmas day, which was just at hand, he partook on that occasion of food ; but on the confessor discovering the fact, he declared, with great indignation, that he would have no more to do with one who dared to trifle with his commands. In vain were the apologies, entreaties, and promises of the applicant ; the ecclesiastic spurned him from his feet, and left him alone in despair. As he sauntered down the avenue, he thus expressed his poignant feelings : “ Alas ! what now shall I do ? I have hitherto experienced from the priest only kindness and parental tenderness ; but I am now cast off without mercy from the tribunal of the Holy Ghost. There is no space for repentance. All refuge is closed against me, and even hope is extinguished. I am an outcast, an alien, a wretch

devoted to destruction by the plenipotentiary of God."

Struggling with various emotions, he shortly after proceeded to the parish priest, and telling him all that had happened, received the consolatory reply, "Do not mind it, my child; kneel down, and I will hear you myself." Absolution followed, with the imposition of a merely nominal penance. Still the individual was left in great difficulty. He had seen painted on the confessional in the parish chapel, "Whose sins ye remit, they are remitted them; and whose sins ye retain, they are retained;" and yet believing this, here was one priest binding sin on his soul, and absolutely refusing its remission, and another, assuming equal and infallible authority, promptly and cheerfully uttering the words of forgiveness. No wonder then that his mind was troubled.

Another convert from Romanism tells us, that the effects of confession on young minds are, generally, unfavourable to their future peace and virtue. His fancy had been strongly impressed by the representations made to him, and he had shuddered on being told that the act of concealing any thought or action, the rightfulness of which he suspected, would incur the guilt of sacrilege, and greatly increase his danger of

everlasting torments. But though his fears were thus aroused, he was unable to overcome a childish bashfulness, which made the disclosure of a harmless trifle, an effort above his strength.

The appointed day came at last, when he was to wait on the confessor. Now wavering, now determined not to be guilty of sacrilege, he knelt before the priest, leaving, however, in his list of sins, the last place to the hideous offence. But when he came to it—he calls it a petty larceny on a young bird—shame and confusion fell on him, and the accusation stuck in his throat. The imaginary guilt of this silence haunted his mind for four years, gathering horrors at every after confession, and rising into an appalling spectre, when at the age of twelve he was taken to receive the sacrament. In this miserable state he continued, till at the age of fourteen he summoned up sufficient courage to unburden his conscience by a general confession of the past. Nor is this a solitary case. That individual became afterwards a priest, and he affirms that few among the many penitents he examined, have escaped the evils of a similar state.

A strange confounding of things that differ is constantly discoverable ; the atom is magnified to a mountain, while the mountain is reduced to an atom. I was

lately reading of a servant in Ireland, who thought nothing of dancing on the Lord's day, but refused one Friday, on the score of conscience, to eat fish which had been dressed with beef dripping! And this is a common sentiment. Romanists hold that to eat meat on a fast day would be a serious offence, but that a visit to a ball or a theatre is perfectly lawful on the evening of the sabbath! Thus they "put light for darkness, and darkness for light."

Another fact may also be mentioned. A friend of mine, when recently visiting Bruges, had much conversation with the laquais-de-place, whom he employed to show him the objects of interest in the city and neighbourhood. He found that this man was pursuing a very profligate course; when the following dialogue took place:—"Are you a Roman Catholic?" "Yes, certainly I am." "Do you then ever go to confession?" "Oh, yes." "But you do not confess to the priest what you have acknowledged to me." "To be sure I do; how else could I get absolution?" "I should suppose you could not obtain it a second time." "Oh, yes, I always do; for there are several hundred priests in this city and neighbourhood, and I never confess to the same priest twice."

It is unnecessary further to multiply such instances.

Confession, a fruitful parent of evil, emboldens many to repeat their crimes, believing that they are sure of pardon. Dispensations are also of common occurrence.

In the elegant cathedral of Namur a money-box may be observed set apart for its benefit, and which an inscription on it describes to be for the reception of the offerings of those who eat meat in Lent. And what said Claude D'Espence, a celebrated Parisian divine of the Romish church? "Provided money can be extorted, every thing prohibited is permitted. There is almost nothing forbidden that is not dispensed with for money; so that, as Horace said of his age, the greatest crime that a man can commit is to be poor. There are some crimes which persons may have liberty to commit for money; while absolution from all of them, after they have been committed, may be bought."

The most flagrant form in which this act of dispensation appears, is when it sets aside promises and oaths. Some high authorities among Papists countenance the casuistry, that it is lawful to say one thing and think another, even when upon oath, if it were considered to subserve an important purpose. Thus Pascal has quoted a saying of the Jesuits: "One may swear that he has not done a thing, although, in fact, he may have



done it, by understanding, in his own mind, that he did not do it on a certain day, or before he was born, or any similar circumstance, without the words having any sense that would let it be known. And this is very convenient in many situations, and is always very just, when it is necessary, or useful for health, honour, or property." A more flagitious principle of action could not possibly be adopted : it extenuates any evil which there may be a temptation to commit, and even casts over an heinous crime the character of truth and righteousness.

With confession, is inseparably connected one of the sacraments of the Romish church, to which its members attach great efficacy. The word by which this rite is known in their liturgy and canons is, *penitentia* ; a word precisely the same as penitence, or repentance, of which it is manifestly the origin. But repentance denotes a change of mind, produced by Divine operation, of which sorrow for past sins is the natural result, and a different course the invariable evidence. This word, however, is always rendered in the Roman Catholic version of the New Testament "penance ;" and thus the mind is directed to the rite prescribed ; in fact, to the mere ceremonial observance.

Some penances have been already referred to : the

general conditions of this rite are such as fasting, abstinence, and alms-giving ; while others of a more particular kind are, the repetition of ave-marias, pater-nosters, and creeds. Some penances, however, are very severe. But from the definition of a sacrament, the Romanist has learned that it confers the grace it represents, and that the mere act of its performance is efficacious. The consequence is, that he will repair to the priest, make a hurried confession—for a priest will hear the confessions of ten persons in an hour—perform the penance enjoined, and then conclude he has actually repented, and that the absolution granted by his confessor is positive and final. No wonder then that he returns home, and indulges in known sin without even remorse of conscience.

In reference to Mexico, Mr. Latrobe remarks : “The multitude hailed the conclusion of the holy week. Before an hour was at an end, the streets resounded to the roll of the carriages and the sounds of innumerable hoofs ; the calzadas and canals were crowded with Indians returning to their homes ; the buyer and the dealer repaired to their traffic ; the idler to his vices, and the gambler to the monte-table. The robber, exulting under his lightened conscience, betook himself to his stand in the pine-forest, to commence a

fresh career of rapine ; and the assassin to the resumption of his cherished schemes of blood and vengeance. The re-opening of the Opera was publicly announced, and the citizens joyfully anticipated the recommencement of bull-fights."

"Those that have interest with the pope," says another modern traveller, "may obtain an absolution in full from his holiness for all the sins they have ever committed, or may choose to commit. I have seen one of these edifying documents, signed by the present pope to a friend of mine. It was most unequivocally worded." Another says: "At Tivoli, a man was pointed out to us who had stabbed his brother, who died in agonies within an hour. The murderer went to Rome, purchased his pardon from the church, and received a written protection from a cardinal, in consequence of which he was walking about unconcernedly, a second Cain, whose life was sacred."

Pilgrimage is one form of penance, which consists in taking a journey to some place reported to be holy. It began to be made about the middle ages of the church, but became most general after the end of the eleventh century, when kings and princes visited places of devotion, and bishops left their churches with the same object. The places most frequented by the

pilgrims were Rome, Jerusalem, Compostella, and Tours. Latterly the greatest numbers have resorted to Loretto, to visit the chamber in which it is said Mary was born, and brought up her son Jesus, till he was twelve years of age.

In almost every country where Popery has been established, pilgrimages have been common. In England, the shrine of St. Thomas á Becket was a chief resort of the pious; in Scotland it was at St. Andrew's, where it was said a leg of the apostle was deposited. In Ireland they have been continued even down to modern times. In that country "holy wells," as they are called, are very numerous. To one spring in the county of Meath is attached the following legend. Mr. Warren, the proprietor of the land about it, was washing himself in the river Jordan, to which he had gone on pilgrimage, when his staff dropped into the water, and was conveyed through a subterraneous passage to this well, and cast up by the water one Midsummer day in the sight of his shepherd! On the man taking it to Mrs. Warren, she immediately knew it to be her husband's staff, and found an inscription on it, stating that great benefit would be derived from a pilgrimage to that well on St. John the Baptist's day!

Accordingly it is much resorted to by pilgrims on

Midsummer eve. When they come within sight of the well, they approach it bare-footed and bare-headed, and they drink plentifully of the water. At the east corner they kneel, and say five paters, five aves, and one creed ; and the same number, in the same posture, at each of the other three corners, and going thrice round on their knees, one station, as it is called, is made up. Four of these stations are thus gone through ; after which they kneel in the water, say three paters, three aves, and one creed, drink of the water, wash in it, and conclude all with prayers to John the Baptist for his aid and intercession.

In the county of Monaghan there is a well, said to have been consecrated by St. Patrick, near which is a small heap of stones, surmounted by a large one, having on it the print of his knee, and over all a stone cross, said to be erected there by himself ; and at the distance of forty-nine paces, there is an alder tree, which is affirmed to have sprung up immediately on his blessing the ground. The pilgrims who come hither, first kneel at the north side of the well, salute St. Patrick, and say fifteen paters and one creed. They rise up, bow to him, walk thrice round the well, and drink of the water each time at the place where they began. From thence they go to the heap of stones, bow to the cross, kiss the print

of St. Patrick's knee, and put one of their knees into it. They then go thrice round the heap on their knees, always kissing this stone; when they come to it, they rise up, bow to it, and walk thrice round, bowing to the stone whenever they come before it, and the last time they kiss it. They go from the heap of stones to the alder tree, beginning at the west side by bowing to it, then going thrice round they bow to it from east to west, and then say fifteen paters and one creed. When any of the neighbours have their cattle sick, some of the water of this well is used in expectation of a cure—a strange and almost incredible folly, which is, however, of frequent occurrence.

But the most remarkable superstition of this kind appears in the pilgrimage of immense numbers of persons to St. Patrick's Purgatory, which is in an island situated in the midst of a lake in the county of Donegal. As soon as they come in sight of it, they take off their shoes and stockings, uncover their heads, and walk with their beads in one hand, and sometimes a cross in the other, to the lake side, from whence, at the charge of sixpence each, they are ferried over. They then go to the prior, and ask his blessing; and afterwards to St. Patrick's altar, where, on their knees, they say one pater, one ave, and one creed, at the close of which

they rise and enter the chapel, where they recite three paters, three aves, and one creed. Beginning now at a corner of the chapel, they walk round it and St. Patrick's altar seven times, saying ten ave-marias and one pater every circuit. In the first and last they kiss the cross before the chapel, and at the last touch it with their shoulders.

They then visit the penitential beds, on which seven saints are said to have slept, and each of which is a collection of hard stones: they go round each of these thrice, while three paters, three aves, and one creed are said, and then kneeling, they recite the like number. Each bed is now separately entered, and going round it thrice in the inside, they say three paters, three aves, and one creed; at the close of which they kneel and repeat three more of each. Leaving these beds, they go into the water, and thrice round some sacred stones, saying five paters, five aves, and one creed; after that they go farther into the water to another stone, and say one pater, one ave, and one creed, with their hands lifted up; from thence they return to the chapel, where they repeat the Lady's Psalter, consisting, according to some, of fifty aves and five paters, or according to others, of a hundred and fifty aves and fifteen paters; and thus they finish one station, which must be



performed every day, about sun-rise, noon, and sun-set, bread and water only being allowed the pilgrims.

On the ninth day they are put by the prior into St. Patrick's cave, where they are closely shut up for twenty-four hours, are bound to say there as many prayers as on the preceding days, and are denied all kinds of refreshment. On the tenth day they are released, when they proceed immediately into the water to wash themselves, and more particularly the head. During these ceremonies mass is celebrated several times a day, and a sermon is daily preached in the Irish language. Confession must be made to a priest before the stations are begun, and some pilgrims do it much oftener, paying sixpence each time. In all their perambulations a staff, with a cross at the end, is carried.

If any cannot perform this penance themselves, a license may be obtained from the prior for another to do it for them: the proxy is paid for this service, and it is considered as available as that of the original party. On the return of the pilgrims, they are treated by the common people with great veneration; they generally kneel down and ask their blessing. Here again is the influence of the totally unscriptural doctrine of human merit: the deluded creatures who have gone through the penances

described, fancy they have gained it; and those who meet them on their way, equally superstitious, suppose that their words convey some peculiar virtue.

A superstitious reverence is paid by pilgrims to what are called relics, the remains of the bodies or clothes of saints or martyrs, and the instruments by which they were put to death, which being devoutly preserved in honour to their memory, are kissed, revered, and sometimes carried in procession. Charlemagne is declared to have been a great collector of relics, and to have obtained some of the most important from Jerusalem itself, from his having become master, as emperor of the West, not only of the Holy Sepulchre, but of many other sacred places and treasures, for which he was indebted to the king of Persia; while many precious relics are said to have been presents to him from the Greek emperors at Constantinople. Receiving them from every part of the globe, from a dread of his arms, or attachment to his religion, he distributed them among the various churches he founded, reserving the chief of them for his favourite of Nôtre Dame, at Aix la Chapelle.

The visitors who wish to behold them, are soon introduced to the sacristan, who orders two candles to be lighted, though the room may not be at the time so

dark as absolutely to require their aid. The relics are divided into two classes ; the great and the small. The former are in a large silver-gilt shrine, in the form of a gothic tomb, richly sculptured, and adorned, it is said, with precious stones. On its being opened, the relics, are exhibited for a fortnight, every seven years, to crowds of devotees, who joyously receive fragments of the old silks in which they have been wrapped. They are affirmed to be :—the large cloth which received the body of John the Baptist after being beheaded ; the swaddling clothes in which Christ was attired in the manger of Bethlehem ; and as the most precious of the whole, the linen which the Redeemer wore on the cross, bearing upon it the traces of his blood !

The small relics, carried round the city once a year, are deposited in various shrines and cases. They are said to be the skull and two other bones of Charlemagne ; a tooth of St. Catherine ; some hair of John the Baptist ; a link of the chain of Peter when in prison ; a morsel of the arm of Simeon, in which he held the infant Saviour ; Christ's leathern girdle ; a piece of the cord with which his hands were bound on the cross ; a piece of the sponge with which his lips were moistened ; a spine of the crown of thorns which was placed on his head ; and, omitting a few relics of humbler pretensions, one or two pieces of the true cross !

At the back of the high altar of the church at Kreutzberg, there is a wide and superb marble staircase, leading down to the front of the edifice. So sacred is this professedly esteemed, that visitors are not allowed to walk on it, but are obliged to descend by its side. What, then, is the claim set up for it? That it belonged to Pilate's judgment-hall, was trodden by the Redeemer after he was scourged, and that after being taken from Jerusalem to Rome, it was brought hither! Little circular pieces of brass let into the stone, representing a number of drops of blood clotted together, are pointed out, and for these it is to be regarded with peculiar veneration.

Here the influence of the pope appears. It is he who warrants the supernatural state of incorruption of the body of one saint, and traces, it is supposed, with unerring certainty, some straggling limb to another! He, alone, has also the undoubted power of virtually furnishing the members of the Romish church with the relics of the most ancient or unknown patriarchs and martyrs, by declaring the fragments of any skeleton from the catacombs to be a part of the body in request. This is called christening relics. The persuasion that bones which have passed through this process, are as good as those of the favourite saint to whom they are attributed, is general in Spain, and probably common to all Romanists.

In early ages we find the origin of a widely extended, and to the church of Rome, a profitable superstition. Thus, a hole was made in the coffins of forty martyrs at Constantinople, from an opinion that whatever touched them, derived from so doing extraordinary benefits. An ancient custom also prevailed among Christians, of assembling at the burying places of martyrs, to commemorate them, and to perform Divine worship there. Under the dominion of Constantine the Great, stately churches were erected over sepulchres; religious services performed over them, were thought to have a peculiar sanctity and virtue; and hence the practice afterwards obtained of depositing relics of saints and martyrs under the altars of churches. St. Ambrose would not consecrate a church because it had none; and the council of Constantinople in Trullo, decreed that those altars under which no relics were found, should be demolished. So excessive, indeed, became the rage for procuring relics, that the emperor Theodosius the Great passed a law in 386, forbidding the people to dig up the bodies of the martyrs, and to traffic in their relics.

The necessity of relics in a church is pleaded for in the present day. In the sanctuary, as it is called, of every Roman Catholic chapel, as we have seen, appears

the altar, which, in England, is of wood, stone, or marble; but there must be, at least, a square slab of the latter in the centre, on which, to use the Papists' phrase, "the sacrifice may be offered." Its corners bear the initials of the saint or angel to which it is dedicated, or else those of the Virgin or the Saviour; and in it, it is said, there must be deposited a portion of the blood, bones, or other relics of saints. The process adopted in this case is not a little singular. The initials are always deeply engraved in the marble, and the bones, or other relics, being reduced to powder, are mixed with what is considered to be the blood, and then poured into the incisions, where they become hard. It is believed that the slabs are brought from Rome, and that the relics are deposited under the directions of the pope; but every one undergoes the ceremony of consecration, and when set in its appointed place is covered with a linen cloth, adorned with fringes, ribbons, and lace.

The influx of travellers in early times in to the eastern provinces, in order to frequent the places which Christ and his disciples had honoured with their presence, that with their bones and other remains, they might exert what was deemed a valuable influence, led, of course, to a great amount of fraud and imposture. The craft, dexterity, and knavery of the Greeks, found

a rich prey to the credulity of the Latin relic-hunters. The latter paid considerable sums for legs and arms, skulls and jaw-bones, many of which were pagan, and some not human, and other things which were supposed to belong to distinguished members of the early church ; and thus they came into possession of relics, shown with much ostentation at the present day.

Of imposition, in such cases, many instances might be given. Luther says, he had seen an image of Mary with her child, in the monastery at Isenach. When a wealthy person came thither to pray to it, the child turned away its face to its mother, as if it refused to listen, and had to seek Mary's help. But if the applicant gave liberally to the monastery, the child turned to him again ; and if he promised to give more, it showed itself very friendly and loving, and stretched out its arms over him in the form of a cross. But how was this miracle wrought ? By human mechanism. The image was made hollow within, and prepared with hooks, lines, and screws, and behind it stood a person, who moved it according to the effect it was wished to produce.

One of the military who has recounted his campaigns in the Spanish war, relates, that his company being quartered one night in a chapel for shelter, they



observed a large image ; in it they discovered a small door, by which a man might be admitted into the body of the figure from the vestry, and strings were hanging down by which the eyes might be moved. Just as they had done amusing themselves with this juggling trick, the priests arrived, and hastened to take down the image, covering it with a cloth, and carrying it on a bier, professing to remove it lest it should be profaned by the near approach of heretics ! Their real motive is evident ; they wished to conceal the base artifice, but they came too late.

There is another tale of the same kind. A Dutchman confessing to a priest at Rome, promised, by an oath, to keep secret whatever the priest should impart to him till he came into Germany ; on which he received a leg of the ass on which Christ rode into Jerusalem, very neatly bound up in cloth, with these words, " This is the holy relic on which the Lord Christ did corporeally sit, and with his sacred legs touched this ass's leg !" Greatly pleased with the gift, the Dutchman carried the relic into Germany, and when he came on the borders, boasted of his possession in the presence of four of his companions, at the same time showing it to them. But each of the four had also promised the same secrecy, and received the

same gift; they inquired therefore with astonishment, whether the ass on which Christ rode, had five legs? The question might as properly have been, whether it had fifty, or five hundred, for doubtless, such relics were given just as long as there were such applicants.

Some years ago, a vendor of relics, wearing a mask, and carrying a guitar, appeared at Naples. He was surrounded by a mob of men, women, and children, whom he had collected by singing aloud to his instrument, and by a hundred droll stories about every thing in the nursery, the calendar, and the market. At length, this merchant threw off his visor, laid aside his guitar, opened a small casket, containing leaden crucifixes, with other church wares, for sale; and thus addressed the crowd:—

“Gentlemen and ladies! there is a time for every thing. Of jesting we have quite enough. Innocent mirth is good for the body, but we require something good for the soul. With your consent, most illustrious signors and signoras, I will entertain you with something serious, something for which you will all bless me as long as you live. Behold this satchel, and see these precious gems which, lo! I shake out of it. I have just

returned from the holy house of Loretto,\* on purpose to supply you with these jewels—jewels more precious than all the gold of Peru, than all the pearls of the ocean. Now, beloved brethren and sisters, you doubtless fancy I am about to demand a price for these holy crosses infinitely above your means, in order to indemnify me for the fatigue I have borne, purely for your good ; for I have come from that blessed house of Loretto, to this most celebrated city of Naples, the affluence and generosity of whose inhabitants are celebrated all the whole world over. But no, my generous friends, of your liberality and piety I shall take no such mean advantage ; for though all these blessed crucifixes have actually touched the foot of that holy image of the blessed Virgin, which was painted by St. Luke, yet I disdain to demand a price at all equal to their intrinsic worth. I ask not a doubloon, no, nor yet a dollar ; in short, from pure love to you, I sell them at *a penny* a piece ! ”

The relics of this vendor were, doubtless, as genuine and valuable as many of far higher pretensions. The following are exhibited at the church of St. John, at

\* “La Santa Casa di Loretto,” fabled to have been transported by angels from the city of Jerusalem to Dalmatia, and thence to Loretto, in Italy.

Rome, on Holy Thursday : the heads of St. Peter and St. Paul, encased in silver busts, set with jewels ; a lock of the Virgin Mary's hair, and a piece of her petticoat ; a robe of the Saviour's, sprinkled with his blood ; some drops of his blood in a phial ; some of the water which flowed from the wound in his side ; some of the sponge raised to his lips ; the table at which our Lord ate the last supper—which could only have held the twelve apostles by miracle, as it seems impossible for more than two persons to sit at it ; a piece of the stone of the sepulchre on which the angel sat ; and the very porphyry pillar from which the cock crowed after Peter denied Christ. “ I thought all these sufficiently marvellous,” says the narrator, “ but what was my surprise to find the rods of Moses and Aaron !—though how they got them nobody knows—and two pieces of the wood of the real ark of the covenant ! ”

The absurdity of such pretensions might excite a smile, were it not for the flagrant wickedness by which they are often accompanied. Thus an account of the relics of Charlemagne is still sold at Aix-la-Chapelle, under the authority of the vicar-general. It not only describes them, but argues their genuineness, and contains the form of words annually employed in announcing the four great relics to the people, with the prayers

that are to be offered during their exhibition : one of which is for the pope and his cardinals, the king of Prussia, the archbishop of Cologne, the city and authorities of the place in which they are shown, the pilgrims by whom they are visited, and the souls of the departed. Still further, it teaches that the presence and contemplation of these relics are a pledge of the special favour and intercession of those for whose use they were consecrated, or with whose persons they were once identified ; and they are actually pronounced to be the source of all happiness, welfare, and prosperity to the city, having, notwithstanding the devastations of the Normans, and the troubles occasioned by heretics, its occupancy by enemies, and its having been repeatedly destroyed by fire, never been taken away, or fallen under the power of adversaries.

Such facts as these are really confounding ; it is difficult to give any adequate expression to our disgust and horror. Oil, holy-water, and relics, bones, bits of wood or cloth, and other scraps of trumpery, stand in the place of God. In them is the power by which evil may be averted, and good enjoyed ! Fearful is such delusion, tremendous the criminality it involves.

## LETTER VIII.

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THE MASS—MODE OF ITS CELEBRATION—THE DOCTRINE OF  
TRANSUBSTANTIATION EXAMINED AND REFUTED—THE CUP  
FORBIDDEN TO THE LAITY.

THE Divine Redeemer having eaten the passover with his disciples on the evening on which he was betrayed, directed them to partake together of bread and wine, to be a memorial of his sufferings, and a seal of the new covenant which, on the next day, he was to confirm with his blood. It is evident, from the words he then spake, (see Matt. xxvi. 26—28; Mark xiv. 22—24; Luke xxii. 17—20; 1 Cor. xi. 23—26,) that the ordinance thus instituted was designed to be perpetual; and we know it has been observed by the followers of Christ, from that time to the present. In the primitive church, the original institution was retained in all its simplicity; but by the church of Rome it has been awfully corrupted; and this is the point which is now to be considered.

In the centre of what is called the altar of every Romish chapel, but placed a little from the front, stands what is called the "tabernacle," consisting of polished brass, marble, silver, gold, or, at least, gilded wood. Its shape is generally octagonal ; its height, from eighteen inches to four feet ; and its diameter, from about one foot to three. In it are deposited the *pix* and the *ciborium*, formed alike of silver or gold ; or, if only plated, the inside of each must be formed of the precious metal. The *pix* contains the large consecrated wafer, intended to be exhibited for the adoration of worshippers ; the *ciborium*, the smaller ones prepared for distribution among the communicants. In each case the quality is the same : the wafer always consisting of wheat-flour and water, unleavened, baked between two iron plates, from which each one receives an impression of the cross, on which the Saviour is suspended, and also the initials I. H. S. The large wafers are about three inches in diameter, the small ones rather larger than a shilling ; all are cut out from the thin unleavened cake with an iron instrument, giving them at once a circular form, and are either provided by the servants of the priests, or obtained in packets from the Roman Catholic book-sellers. Above the tabernacle appears a cross, generally made of some of the richer woods, to which a smaller



crucifix is attached, and without which, it is said, mass can never be celebrated.

In a low mass, where the service is merely recited, there is only a priest with his two clerks, who are sometimes little boys. In a high mass, when the service is chaunted, a priest, a deacon, and a sub-deacon are engaged, together with two boys, called acolytes, and a thurifer, or incense-bearer. The priest, deacon, and sub-deacon, are robed and vested in a similar manner, and in the same colour; the acolytes, thurifer, and torch-bearers, wear black or crimson cassocks, over which is worn a white surplice. The sub-deacon has to assist in the general celebration of mass, to sing the Epistle, and to bear the paten; on the deacon it devolves, also, to assist in the general celebration, to sing the Gospel, and to assist in the distribution when there are communicants. The thurifer carries the thurible and incense-pot; the acolytes merely assist the deacon and sub-deacon, carrying to them the wine, water, and whatever else they require; and the torch-bearers are employed, as their name denotes, and give effect to the whole.

It may also be stated, that a high mass is chaunted by the priest, while its different parts are sung by the choir. A bishop's high mass is similar, but far more

splendid and imposing. In addition to the usual officers, there are, on such occasions, a crosier-bearer, and a mitre-bearer; deacons, sub-deacons, or priests assist in attiring the bishop; and he may be seen, vesting himself, with their aid, near to the altar, even to his shoes and stockings.

When high mass is about to be celebrated, a priest may be observed to enter, attended by an acolyte; the latter bears a vessel of water, having on its front the letters I. H. S., surrounded with rays of glory; and the former is provided with a brush, having a long handle, greatly resembling in shape those made of feathers, and used for dusting chimney ornaments. After the customary genuflexions at the altar, they turn their backs to it, and proceed together along the aisle of the church, through the whole congregation, while the priest, dipping the brush from time to time into the water, sprinkles the people with it on the right hand and the left. As the instrument is waved towards any, or the drops fall on them, each one makes the sign of the cross. As soon as this ceremony is ended, the leader of the ceremonial, attended by acolytes, and incense-bearers, appears, sometimes in gorgeous array, and the highest service of the church of Rome proceeds.

The priest, standing at the bottom of the altar steps,

with an acolyte kneeling on his right hand, and another on his left, now makes the sign of the cross, saying, "In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Amen." He then says, "I will go to the altar of God," and afterwards recites with the clerks, in alternate verses, the Psalm agreeing with the forty-third of the Protestant version. Now follows the confiteor, or confession. At its close, the priest ascends the three steps to the middle of the altar, and kisses it. Then follow prayers, the reading of an Epistle on the left hand of the altar, and that of a Gospel at the right, during which the congregation rise, and make a cross on the forehead, the lips, and the breast; and afterwards there is the recitation of the creed.

At this time the wine and water are put into the chalice, and the lavabo, or washing of the priests' hands takes place. To this succeeds the thanksgiving, at which a bell is rung three times; and the consecration of the wafer, or host, which the priest elevates, and at the same time adores, while all who are present bow their heads, and remain in solemn silence. The acolytes now retire behind the priest, hold up his robe, called the chasibule, and ring a bell under the tail of it.

Immediately after, the elevation and adoration of the chalice takes place. The act called the consecration,

is considered the most solemn part of mass, for it is maintained, that when the words, "This is my body—This is my blood," which constitute the essence of the consecration, are pronounced in Latin ; the bread and wine are totally changed, and become "the very body and blood, soul and Divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ."

A paternoster follows, and a communion, during which, the priest swallows the wafer as the people do, without biting it, and drinks the wine. Ablution, the cleansing or washing of the chalice, then takes place, with the drinking of the water thus employed ; prayers are offered, and the last Gospel is read, which is the first part of the first chapter of St. John's Gospel.

The form of administering the sacrament, which must be received fasting, is invariable. The consecrated wafers are placed by the priest in the chalice, or in the paten, when he is about to distribute to the laity, each of whom kneels in the front of the sanctuary. The clerks, in the name of the communicants, say the confiteor, and the priest gives them absolution. A long towel is placed in front of the sanctuary, which each communicant takes in his hand, and places under his chin ; he then throws back his head a little, opens his mouth, and protrudes his tongue ; on doing which, the priest

takes a wafer between his thumb and finger, and carefully places it on the tongue of the communicant.

A mind familiar with the New Testament, and aware of the simplicity of the institutes of the Gospel, is not a little revolted by these various ceremonies. Well may it be asked, What can be their meaning? The ordinary mass, as explained in the "*Tesaro della Devozione*," a little book, put into the hands of all the Italians that can read, and answering the purpose of the English Prayer-book, is a lively representation of the last scenes of our Saviour's life and sufferings; and the same is found in English in a small tract, entitled "*Daily Devotions, or the most profitable manner of hearing Mass.*" Thus when the priest approaches the altar, Christ's entrance into the garden is to be understood; and to the prayer which he offers there, the commencement of the mass alludes. When the priest kisses the altar, reference is made to that kiss by which the Saviour was betrayed. When he turns to the people, and repeats the "*Dominus vobiscum*," (The Lord be with you,) he is representing Christ when he turned and looked upon Peter. When he washes his hands, he figures Pilate, who declared that he washed his hands of the blood of that innocent man. When he elevates the consecrated wafer, he expresses the elevation

of our Saviour on the cross. When he breaks it, he displays him expiring ! Such are the vain interpretations of the church of Rome !

It is, therefore, only to compare the practice of the Romish church, with Christ's ordinance, to perceive that the deviation from it is glaring and awful. To find the model after which it is fashioned, we must go, as we have done before, to pagan temples. Here, the sacrifices offered by the priests, did not always consist of slain animals ; a small round wafer, presented at the altar, was often considered a sufficient offering for the removal of the sins of the people. It is remarkable, that the name given it by the pagans, was *mola*, from whence is derived the word *immolare*, meaning, to immolate, as from *hostia*, comes *hostire*, signifying, to offer up the host ; and that this service, instituted by Numa, was named by Alexander ab Alexandro, " the unbloody sacrifice."

The pagan ritual in the presentation of offerings equally accords with the service of the Romish church as already described. It required that the sacrifice should be made before noon, as the hours preceding it were considered most appropriate. The priest, with his head shaved, a white robe called *alba*, a coloured tunic, a pectoral covering his breast, and an amict, or veil, en-

tered on the appointed service ; and after washing his hands, he walked round the altar, and having made obeisance before it, stood facing the people who were considered his assistants in the celebration. Meanwhile the altar was decorated with lighted tapers. Incense was burned by inferior priests, while he made a prescribed number of prostrations ; when he spoke, it was in the Latin tongue ; and on the sacrifice being ended, the image of the god was carefully locked up, and the people were dismissed with the words, “ It is concluded ; ” and the inferiors sprinkling the people with water having salt in it, which was called cleansing, or “ holy water,” retired to their homes, imagining that all the worshippers had obtained a Divine pardon.

In one remarkable particular, however, heathens differed from Romanists in this service, which discovers, even on a slight observation, so many points of analogy to theirs. It would appear, that some persons had affirmed, that the priests believed or taught, that in eating the wafers used in sacrifice, the body of their god was actually participated by the worshippers—but was this statement admitted by Cicero ? On the contrary, he exclaims, with manifest indignation, “ Who is there, that has ever discovered a race of men so destitute of understanding, as to be capable of the belief, that the



things which they eat, and which afford sustenance to their bodies, are their gods?" "Christians," said Crotus the Jew, in the language of surprise and repugnance, "eat their God!" And Averroes, the Arabian philosopher, said, "I have travelled over the world, and seen many people; but none so sottish and ridiculous as Christians, who devour the God whom they worship."

Allusion has been made to the artifices adopted by Romish priests to gain admission for their doctrines, by flatly denying what is likely to awaken suspicion or disgust. The present is another case in point. A priest, explaining the doctrine of the eucharist to an extern, or one whom he hoped to proselyte, would affirm, that the change which takes place in the consecration of the wafer, is held by the Romish church to be entirely spiritual, and that it does not involve the physical change commonly, but erroneously imagined. And yet that church teaches that the faithful, in that sacrament, do verily and indeed take, eat, and receive the blood, body, soul, and Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ; that it was the very body that was broken, and the very blood that was shed in his crucifixion. "Not only that the true body of Christ, and whatsoever belongs to the true nature of a body, as bones and sinews, but also

that whole Christ, (*totum Christum*,) is contained in this sacrament ;” and again, “We must believe all the parts of a body, and of blood also, to be in the sacrament,” as the original of the Catechism of the Council of Trent expressly declares.

In the “benedictions,” a part of the service of almost weekly occurrence, and in English monasteries, sometimes used frequently in the course of a week, it is said :—“Hail, true body, born of the blessed Virgin Mary ; which truly didst suffer, and was immolated on the cross for man ; whose side being pierced, sent forth the true blood. O grant that I may worthily receive that at the hour of my death. O most clement, O most gracious, O most sweet Saviour, Jesus, Son of the eternal God, and of the ever-blessed Virgin, have mercy on me !”

That a change actually takes place in the elements, is clearly the doctrine of the Romish church, whatever may be affirmed, in the hope of gaining an increase of its members. The propriety of a question of Lady Jane Grey, when very young, cannot, therefore, be fairly disputed. She was at Newhall, in Essex, the seat of Mary, afterwards raised to the throne of England, when walking near the chapel with Lady Anne Wharton, she observed her companion as they passed,

bow to the elements of the altar. Affecting surprise, she inquired if the Lady Mary were in the chapel. "No," replied her companion, "I bend to Him who made us all." "How is that," retorted Lady Jane; "can He be there who made us all, and yet the baker made him?"

The dogma of the church of Rome, thus ingeniously attacked, involves some singular regulations. If, by accident, a wafer should fall on the towel, this must be washed three times; should it fall upon the carpet, or drugget, covering the floor of the sanctuary, that must be washed three times: and should it fall, so that the communicant catch it in his hand, he is required to hold out his hand, after the wafer has been taken away, until mass is finished, when the priest rubs the communicant's hand with bread, and washes it in several waters before it is permitted to be used. The bread, or water, is either buried or burned: the latter being put on the fire, and evaporated. If, moreover, an attendant has to pass the altar before consecration, he merely bows his head; if, after that ceremony, he bows his knee. According to a table of fines for the commutation of offences, a priest who struck another before mass, was to pay two ducats, but if the blow were given after it, he was charged three.

In all Roman Catholic countries, but particularly in Spain, special honours are reserved for the consecrated host, as it is borne along through the streets. The rule is, that external homage is due to the king upon seeing him, and to God, that is, the host, preceded by the bell, the very moment you hear him. To both the title of Majesty is applied; and a foreigner is often surprised at the hopes expressed by the Spaniards, that "his Majesty will be pleased to grant them life and health for many years more." Accordingly, the ear of the passer by is often saluted with the sound, "Dios su Magestad," and he has to kneel in homage to the host. In the house, the same law operates. In the midst of a gay, noisy party, the sound of the bell will bring every one on his knees, until the tinkling dies away in the distance. Those at dinner must leave the table; those who are in bed, must at least sit up; cards are laid aside, and even the actors and dancers of the theatre pause, while they and their company fall on their knees; but as soon as the sound of the bell is gone, the round of folly and sin is immediately resumed. Not less preposterous is the course adopted when the sick man receives the host: hardly able, perhaps, to swallow, a glass of water is given him to drink, and then the clerk says, "Has his Majesty passed?"

“One of the convents, the Dominican, I think,” says Inglis, “lay in my way, and I noticed several times the same new carriage standing at the door; and upon inquiring the meaning of this, I received the following explanation. When a devout person has a carriage built, it is sent to wait at the door of one of the churches or convents, until some dying person may happen to send to it for the last offices of religion; and until the carriage has been blessed by carrying the host, the owner would feel himself unblessed in entering it.” If, too, a person driving in his carriage at Seville, should meet the procession of the host, he must leave his carriage, and give it up to the host, and the attendant priest; or if a carriage should drive past the door of a house, into which the host has already entered, the carriage must wait at the door, to carry back to the church, or the convent, the consecrated wafer.

Gross, indeed, is the superstition so fearfully apparent; the strongest words seem weak in describing it: but such facts come upon us from all directions where Popery prevails. At the funeral of the late archbishop of Paris, in 1840, while psalms were continually sung by one company of priests, relieved at stated intervals, another was engaged in a most disgusting ceremony, that of laying the wafers used in the eucharist, on the already

putrid lips of the fast decaying carcase, and then administering them to those who kneeled around, and who seemed to consider that they were highly honoured!

But turning from such circumstances, the Papist goes farther, be it remarked, than a general homage of the host : the Deity and humanity of the Son of God are declared to be entire in the bread, and also in the wine, and equally entire in every particle of which they are composed. A particle of the wafer, a drop of the wine, is therefore held to include the whole. Accordingly, a sacristan, who has the charge of Romish vestments and vessels, has to wash the munditories and corporals used by the priest, in three separate waters, before they go to the laundry ; and to see that the water is carefully buried in the cemetery, or evaporated by fire ; and that the vessels in which such washings take place, are swilled three times, lest there should remain any particle of the wafer, or drop of the wine. But all such acts, varied as they may be, arise from a fable—a wretched fable. The doctrine of transubstantiation must be utterly rejected for three reasons.

In the first place, it is opposed to the testimony of the senses. And this should be regarded in such a case, because the elements of the mass are material, and therefore within the range of these physical organs.

The sight, the smell, the touch, the taste, here act in their proper sphere, and are engaged with their appropriate objects. But they can detect no difference between the wafer, or the wine, in consequence of the act of consecration: they evidently are after it, just what they were before it; and they are so invariably, not only in my experience, but in that of all who bring them to the same test. The senses, whenever, and by whomsoever exercised, testify that the wafer and the wine are precisely what they were. If it is affirmed that the senses are deceived, when, as they thus fail universally, can we trust them? Assuredly we never can; and we must reject at once, and for ever, all their intimations. Is such a conclusion absurd? Then we must discard the doctrine that drives us to it. Our Lord himself urges this course, for he appealed to sense as conclusive, Luke xxiv. 37—39; John xx. 27. Besides, the miracles on which the Divine origin of Christianity rests, were appeals to sense. Could the eyes, the ears, the touch be deceived, there might be a miracle pretended, when none was wrought. To assert the doctrine of transubstantiation—to affirm that the evidence of sense must be rejected, is impiously to deprive Christianity of the attestation of miracles, to rob it of the impress of the broad seal of Heaven.



Reason is equally opposed with the senses to this dogma, which supposes a body to be, at the same time, in more places than one. According to the doctrine of Romanists, it is at the right hand of God, and on the altars of their churches; it is not merely in one place on earth, but wherever a priest duly pronounces the words of institution; it is not present as a piece of matter may be, by being divided, and carried hither and thither, but it is wholly present wherever and whenever mass is celebrated: and what is more, the humanity of Christ is said to be glorified on the throne of universal empire, and humbled on the Romish altar; it is seen and adored by happy spirits above, and it is concealed from the view of men under the appearance of bread and wine! Still further, this doctrine supposes that the properties of matter may be separated from it, and may subsist by themselves. What would be said were a Papist to affirm, that a man's shape and features might continue to be visible, after he had disappeared? Assuredly, he would be convicted of the grossest folly, unless positively insane; and yet all this is chargeable on him, when he holds that the appearance and properties of bread may remain after it is totally changed into another and different substance! A directly opposite conclusion is demanded by sound judgment.

Another dictate of reason is, that whatever is received into the human system, can only be of advantage as it becomes assimilated to it; and how can this take place with "soul and Divinity?" Let these properties be given up, and what is received partakes merely of the qualities of food; or retain them, and reason affirms that the effect can still only be physical. Here, then, is another argument, sanctioned by the example of "the great Teacher of Israel." "He called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand: not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man," Matt. xv. 10, 11. With the greatest emphasis we therefore may say, "Not that which goeth into the mouth purifieth a man." The moral state can only be affected and improved by moral means; and with these the wafer, though changed in its substance by consecration, could have no connexion. Transubstantiation leads to absolute scepticism; and a doctrine which leads to scepticism must be false. No doctrine can be true which contradicts the evidence of sense, or which violates the sound dictates of reason. Both are from God, as certainly as revelation is; by both he speaks to us, and what is contrary to their testimony in their proper sphere, cannot proceed from Him who is never at variance with himself.

Papists, however, have recourse to a miracle, and affirm, that there is one in the mass ; but, be it observed, that it is one thing to be contrary to the course of nature, and another to be contrary to the nature of things. Now, it is contrary to the course of nature for the dead to rise to life and activity ; though it is perfectly consistent with almighty power that such cases should occur. But here a complete change is supposed in the nature of things, which is manifestly impossible. With profound reverence we say, that God cannot make a circle square, because the thing implies a contradiction ; in like manner, as place or locality is an attribute of body, he cannot make the body of Christ omnipresent, because to ascribe to it omnipresence is to destroy its very essence. Moreover, it has been the doctrine of the Christian church in all ages, that the two natures of Christ, although united, continue distinct ; for to suppose that Divine properties are communicated to the human nature, is to confound the Creator with the creature ; and even Omnipotence cannot make that which is finite, infinite.

Once more, this doctrine is opposed to the testimony of the word of God. We may appeal, for example, to the record of the institution of the Lord's supper. "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it,

and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat ; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it ; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom," Matt. xxvi. 26—29.

Here, then, our Lord speaks of the bread as his body, and the wine as his blood : that he does so not literally, as Papists say, but figuratively, many circumstances tend to prove. Such a mode of address is common in all languages. Thus, my children, if any one of you pointed to a bust, you would say to a stranger, That is Homer, or Milton, or Locke ; or to a portrait, That is my father, or my mother ; and no mistake would arise : so it would be in other parts of the earth, as the name of the thing signified was given to the sign. The mode of speaking thus common, is peculiarly so to the Syriac tongue, in which our Lord most probably conversed with his disciples, and to other eastern languages, which have no term expressive of " to signify," or " represent," according to our sense of the word. The deficiency is therefore supplied by the substantive verb, and *is* and *are* take the place of the terms just mentioned.

In the Scriptures, examples of this use are very numerous. When Joseph expounded Pharaoh's dream he said, "The seven good kine *are* seven years," Gen. xli. 26. Daniel, when explaining the dreams of the great image and of the great tree, thus addressed Nebuchadnezzar, "Thou *art* this head of gold; and the tree that thou sawest, *it is* thou, O king," Dan. ii. 38; iv. 20, 22. In the New Testament we find the idiom of the Greek followed: as, "The field *is* the world; the good seed *are* the children of the kingdom; but the tares *are* the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them *is* the devil; the harvest *is* the end of the world; and the reapers *are* the angels," Matt. xiii. 38, 39.

In the same way, circumcision, which was only the sign of a solemn engagement, is called by Jehovah, his covenant, and the victim which was slain as a memorial of Israel's deliverance from the destroying angel, is denominated, "the Lord's passover." Pointing to the rock smitten by the rod of Moses, Paul says, "That Rock *was* Christ;" and when urging on the Galatians the liberty offered by the new dispensation, he says, "It is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh;

but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory : for these *are* the two covenants ; the one from Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar," Gal. iv. 22—24.

As, then, Jesus had said on former occasions, in conformity with a practice thus general, "*I am* the door—*I am* the good Shepherd—*I am* the true vine," and as he thus intimated that there were certain respects in which these objects represented himself ; so when he affirmed that the bread was his body, and the wine his blood, his disciples would at once understand that they were so, not literally, but figuratively ; not actually, but symbolically.

Other circumstances would tend to prevent a different conclusion. The disciples were of a race to whom it was said, "The life of the flesh is in the blood ; no soul of you shall eat blood," and hence, when, on another occasion, Jesus spake of eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, the Pharisees denounced it as absurd and impossible. When, too, the ordinance of the Lord's supper was instituted, his body was not broken, his blood was not shed ; the agony of the cross had not been experienced, it was only in prospect. If, however, to remove this difficulty it should be said the terms "broken" and "shed" were used figuratively, it

may be replied, that the whole statement must be interpreted on the same principle ; that it is altogether figurative, or altogether literal. That it was not taken literally, has been already apparent ; but it may perhaps be made still more clear.

Adopting the principle of literal interpretation, the word “cup” neither means the wine nor the blood, for Christ distinctly says, “This cup is the new testament in my blood,” which is to reduce his words to a manifest absurdity. In like manner, there were at this time two bodies of the Saviour, the one saying of the other, “Take, eat,” and as Jesus partook of the bread and the cup, so he must have eaten of his own body, and drank his own blood ! Adopting the figurative sense all is, on the contrary, clear, natural, and consistent : while to this we seem to be shut up by the declaration of Christ, “I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom”—clearly intimating, as words could express, that the wine, though he had blessed it, remained what it was, and that the pretension of the Papist to a change in the elements, as the result of consecration, is utterly unsustained by Christ’s authority.

Another part of the Redeemer’s language is equally metaphorical, for the actions of the mind are often



exhibited in Scripture by those of the body. Solomon says, "The soul of the transgressor shall *eat* violence," Prov. xiii. 2. Jeremiah *ate* the words of God, as did Ezekiel the roll, and John the little book. In his conversation with the woman of Samaria, Christ described his followers as drinking living water. The meaning of such representations is perfectly clear; and, consequently, the whole statement of the Redeemer must be received as figurative.

With the strongest possible evidence against transubstantiation, the question arises, Can it be cordially believed? And certainly there are facts which warrant suspicion of widely extended scepticism on this point. "The consecrated host," says O'Croly, "when it happens to suffer decomposition, is acknowledged to be nothing more than decayed bread, unfit to nourish either body or soul." One would think that such a change were fatal to the belief that here, in circumstances of decay, were the body and soul of the Divine Saviour. Is it said, "They cannot decay?" Then assuredly, they were never there.

One gentleman says, "The late Sir Richard Musgrave, Bart., who wrote a history of the last Irish Rebellion, assured me, that he has frequently seen priests take the wafers from their pixes, (boxes to

hold what they call the consecrated wafer,) and seal their letters with them. If they believe in transubstantiation, they must believe that each wafer contains, nay, is the real body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ; and nothing but the greatest scepticism to their avowed or professed opinions, could induce them to apply this consecrated host to such profane uses."

Only one more fact of this kind need be added. When the cholera visited Rome, the pope, in order to relieve the uneasy apprehensions of infection which troubled the priests in visiting the dying, had recourse to the following extraordinary expedient, to obviate the necessity of contact with the patients. The very words of the pope's order are quoted. "The sanatory commission of the province shall ask of the respective bishops, that there may be given to the parish priests sufficient instruction for the occasion, that when they require it, they may obtain the necessary authority from the holy father; and, in short, that those holy ecclesiastics, who from zeal may devote themselves to the work of the ministry, under circumstances of such danger, may and ought to take precaution, and avoid immediate contact with the sick persons, and therefore may robe themselves as quickly as possible, and administer the eucharist *with a pair of tongs!*" Is it

possible, then, that even the pope believes in transubstantiation?

This doctrine, contradicted alike by sense, reason, and Scripture, appears to have sprung up, and to have been adopted, at a period when true knowledge scarcely existed, when immorality kept pace with ignorance, when the clergy and laity were sunk in equal degeneracy, and when the mind was prepared, under the power of superstition and error, to embrace any absurdity, whatever its grossness. It is traced to Pascasius, who lived in the ninth century, and is affirmed to have been previously unknown. The celebrated Erasmus represents "the church as late in defining transubstantiation, and accounting it enough, during a long period, to believe that the Lord's true body was present under the consecrated bread, or in any other way." Nor did it gain a quiet entrance; it was opposed by nearly all the piety and erudition of the age.

Other corruptions of the ordinance of Christ arose. One was the dipping of the bread in the wine, before its presentation to the communicant: another was the annexing of quills, or pipes of silver, to the chalice, avowedly to prevent the spilling of the fluid, or the irreverent intrusion of men's beards: the third was that of half-communion—the reservation of the cup for the

clergy, and the grant of the wafer only to the laity ; another departure from the primitive rule. This was not fully carried into effect till long afterwards. It was one result of the absurdity of transubstantiation ; and the only reason at first assigned, was the danger lest the blood of Christ should be spilled : but the point gained, was to put a distinction between the priest and the layman. It also led to the absurdity of teaching, that both kinds were received under each, directly contrary both to the literal and the figurative statement of Christ himself.

Appealing again to the Scriptures, it is worthy of remark, that the command in reference to the cup, is more definite and comprehensive than that respecting the bread. In the one instance, we read : " Take, eat ;" in the other, as though it was intended expressly to guard against this gross error, " Drink ye *all* of it." Both appear united when the apostle says : " The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ ? For we being many are one bread, and one body : for we are all partakers of that one bread," 1 Cor. x. 16, 17. With equal clearness, too, does he afterwards show that " the cup of the Lord " was drank of by the members

of the church at Corinth. And there is a general statement in reference to this ordinance, 1 Cor. xi. 23—28.

The withholding the cup from the laity is, therefore, a flagrant innovation on the practice of apostolic times, and one chargeable on the church of Rome at a period comparatively recent. Ignatius says, "One bread is broken to all; one cup is distributed to all." Irenæus declares, that "the flesh is fed by the body and blood of Christ, and that of the cup and the bread the substance of our flesh is increased and consists." Athanasius affirms, that it belongs to the priests of right to give the cup to the people. Speaking of the newly baptized, St. Augustine says, "In all their trials, and their time of being catechumens, they did approve themselves, that they might eat the Lord's body, and drink the cup."

All the ancient accounts we have of the manner of celebrating the Lord's supper show that it was administered in both kinds. The same fact appears in all the offices of the western churches, not excepting the Romish missals, to the twelfth century. One of its forms speaks of the priests commemorating alike with the sacred orders, and with all the people, without any difference: it concludes with the prayer, "That as many

as have taken the body and blood of Christ may be filled with all heavenly benediction and grace ;” and a petition of later date fully corresponds with it in supplicating spiritual blessings for those who, taking “ the communion of this holy bread and cup, are made one body in Christ.”

The origin of the separation of the two elements is referable to the twelfth century. The former practice of communion in both kinds was, however, asserted after the denial of the cup had taken place. So it was with the abbot of Corbey himself, though the parent of transubstantiation. He adds, to statements equally clear and decisive, that “ when Christ gives the sacrament by the hands of the ministers, he says also by them, ‘ Take, and drink ye all of this :’ as well ministers as all the rest that believe ; this is the ‘ cup of my blood, of the new and everlasting testament.’ ” Other declarations were made by various members of the church of Rome of a similar character. The undisputed fact for which we have contended, and the power by which alteration was effected, are, however, alike apparent in the following statements, issued by the Council of Constance : “ Though Christ did administer this venerable sacrament under both kinds of bread and wine ; yet, notwithstanding this, the custom of

communicating under one kind only, is now to be taken for a law."

Out of the mouth of her own zealous advocates, the practice of the church of Rome is condemned. Within its pale the learned Cassander lived and died, yet he says: "It is sufficiently known, that the universal church of Christ to this very day, and the western and Roman for above one thousand years after Christ, did exhibit both the species of bread and wine to all the members of the church, especially in the solemn and ordinary dispensation of the sacrament, which appears from innumerable testimonies, both of the ancient Greek and Latin writers." As, too, some contended that communion in one or both kinds was a matter of indifference, he thus replies: "I have searched, and that not slightly, the custom of the ancient church, and profess to have read the writings of those who have handled this argument with an attentive and impartial mind, and have weighed the reasons by which they endeavour to prove this indifferent custom; but neither could I find any firm proof, which could not be most plainly refuted, though I most earnestly wished it; but there remained many, and those the most strong, reasons which evince the contrary." And with equal candour he adds, in answer to others: "I do not think



that it can be shown, for a whole thousand years and more, that this most holy sacrament of the eucharist was ever administered from the Lord's table, in the holy communion to the faithful people, in any part of the Catholic church, otherwise than under both the symbols of bread and wine."

No violence is done to the cause of Christian charity, by attributing the doctrine of transubstantiation to a love of power. It is, as Burnet long since said, "One of the designs of the priests for establishing the authority of that order;" and hence, as he adds, "No wonder they took all imaginable pains to infuse it into the belief of the world." A race of men who, in the utterance of a few words, could change the wafer into the person of the Saviour, must manifestly rise to a dazzling height beyond the surrounding multitude. "Great," said an inspired apostle, "is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh;" but here, that mystery is declared to be repeated at the will of the priest whenever he pleases. To admit this, is to surrender the soul to a more abject bondage than chains and fetters can impose on the body, and leads on to many evils of the worst description. Any modification of the doctrine of transubstantiation is equally inadmissible, though sometimes contended for by men who call themselves

Protestants ; it teaches a superior, and more than human authority in that man who is supposed to have the power of thus operating upon bread and wine ; and if any departure from the original state of these substances be allowed, we cannot stop till all the absurdities of Rome are admitted. Thought, judgment, affection, are all taken captive, and the most grievous oppression that can arise is experienced—the tyranny of the soul. Hail, happy day, that brought us freedom ! May it soon be possessed by all the enthralled !

The invasion of the Divine prerogative is no less apparent to him who trembles at the word of God. In a great Roman council, Urban said : “ The hands of the pontiff are raised to an eminence granted to none of the angels, of creating God, the Creator of all things, and of offering him up for the salvation of the whole world ; ” and to this blasphemous declaration the synod unanimously answered, Amen. Cardinal Biel says, “ He that created me, gave me, if it be lawful to tell, to create himself.” Extending this power to all priests, he declares that it raises each one above the Virgin Mary, since she only once gave birth “ to the Son of God and the Redeemer of the world, while the priest daily calls into existence the same Deity.”

Impious indeed are such assertions, while they are

connected with others equally so— that Jesus thus appears in the wafer and wine, to be offered up as a sacrifice for sins. That such a representation is erroneous is plain to every attentive reader of the Scriptures. When the apostle Paul was arguing for the substitution of Christianity for Judaism, and for the superiority of Jesus to the priests under the law, he says: “Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s : for this he did *once*, when he offered up himself,” Heb. vii. 26, 27. Again he says: “Christ was *once* offered to bear the sins of many,” Heb. ix. 28; and with equal explicitness, “We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ *once* for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins : but this man, after he had offered *one* sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God,” Heb. x. 10—12. These declarations must exclude from every mind subjected to the authority of Divine revelation, every idea of Christ’s becoming a sacrifice, except on one memorable occasion, when, at the same time the Great High Priest and the victim, he presented himself an offering for the sins of the whole world on the altar of Calvary.

Yes, the whole scheme of mercy was complete when Jesus exclaimed, "It is finished!"

"'Tis finished!" the mysterious plan,  
The mighty destiny of man:  
Angels had gazed with baffled skill,  
And time but travelled to fulfil.

"'Tis finished!" all the vision high  
That rapt of old the prophecy;  
And still with ecstasy shall break  
O'er the last martyr's flaming stake.

"'Tis finished!" see the Victor rise,  
Shake off the grave, and claim the skies.  
Ye heavens, your doors wide open fling;  
Ye angel choirs, receive your King.

"'Tis finished!"—but what mortal dare  
In that triumphant hope to share?  
Saviour, to thy cross I flee;  
Say, "'Tis finished!" *and for me.*

Then will I sing, The cross! the cross!  
And count all other gain but loss:  
I'll sing the cross, and to thy tree,  
Cling evermore, bless'd Calvary

## LETTER IX.

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THE WORSHIP OF SAINTS AND IMAGES—RECENT CANONIZATION  
—ALLIANCE OF ROMANISM WITH THE PRACTICES OF ANCIENT  
HEATHENS—CONDEMNATION OF THEM BY THE SCRIPTURES.

THE heart of man, withdrawn by its depravity from the service of God, sought another object of regard and homage. The creature was soon worshipped more than the Creator, and idols of human invention were revered and loved instead of the Great Supreme. No wonder that tremendous judgments followed such aggravated iniquity.

Ancient idolaters had their tutelary divinities, the supposed defenders of their respective countries, as Belus was of Babylon, and Isis and Osiris of Egypt: and has not Popery invoked the aid of St. James for Spain, St. Louis for France, St. George for England, St. Patrick for Ireland, and others for different parts of the earth? The cities of former times were committed

to the care of various divinities, as Athens to Minerva, Carthage to Juno, and Rome to Quirinus; and those of Rome are entrusted to a similar protection, as Amiens to St. Firmin, and Naples to St. Januarius.

The office of the patron gods of the heathen was to preside over the temples and altars. The patron saints of Papists, among whom they frequently refer to our Lady of Loretto, are analogous to Jupiter in the capitol, and Diana in the temple of Ephesus. Even under the diseases incident to the human frame, they suppose they have an individual on whom to hope, in addition to the physician. According to them, St. Roque is to be invoked when plague is apprehended; St. Domingo cures the fever; St. Blass heals disorders of the throat; St. Lucia those of the eyes; while St. Appolonia preserves the teeth. Other aid is equally besought, as that of St. Anthony the abbot, who is believed by many to secure his votaries from fire; or St. Anthony of Padua, from water; or St. Barbara, who is the refuge of the timid in times of thunder and of war.

Pagans had, in like manner, their intercessory deities. Hesiod clearly states the doctrines concerning demons, or the worship of the spirits of the dead—men eminent for their virtue, and believed to be appointed on that account, by the ruler of the world, to become mediators

and subordinate governors under him. Thus, Apuleius says, "All things are to be thought to be done by the will, power, and authority of the celestial gods, but by the means, despatch, and administration of the demons:" a term designed to point out inferior divinities. Plato makes a similar statement: "The demons are between God and man, interpreting and carrying things between the gods and men ; bringing before the gods the prayers and sacrifices of men ; and bringing to men the orders of the gods, and their rewards for their sacrifices. God is not mixed with men : but through the demons is all converse and intercourse between the gods and men, whether the latter are asleep or awake."

The accordance of these statements with the doctrines of Popery, will be apparent from the following quotation from its most celebrated guides to devotion :—"St. Michael, pray for us. St. Gabriel, pray for us. All ye holy angels and archangels, pray for us. All ye holy orders of blessed spirits, pray for us. St. John Baptist, St. Joseph, all ye holy patriarchs and prophets, pray for us. St. Peter, St. Paul, etc. All ye holy apostles and evangelists, pray for us. All ye holy disciples of our Lord, all ye holy innocents, pray for us. St. Stephen, St. Lawrence, etc. All ye holy bishops and confessors, pray for us. All ye holy priests and Levites, all ye



holy monks and hermits, pray for us. St. Mary Magdalene, St. Agatha, etc. All ye holy virgins and widows, pray for us. All ye men and women, saints of God, make intercession for us." And to mention an individual instance, the cathedral of Freyburg is dedicated to St. Nicholas, and at the entrance there is an inscription, in which the passage in 2 Kings xix. 34, promising Jehovah's protection to Jerusalem against the army of Sennacherib, is thus perverted: "For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant Nicholas's sake."

That Popery remains in this state of gross superstition, as in other respects it continues what it was, is evident from a volume lately published, containing a biography of five new saints, whose canonization took place at Rome so recently as May, 1839. Here, it may be remarked, we witness the close of a long and complicated process. On the death of one whose life and actions are thought to entitle the person to the rank of a saint, the prelate within whose jurisdiction he or she had been, forwards to Rome two documents; one attesting his or her reputation for sanctity and miraculous gifts, the other, that as yet he or she has received no public honours. On the arrival of these papers at Rome, they are laid before the congregation of rites—an ecclesiastical court, com-

posed of a number of cardinals and various subordinate officers. The advocates appointed to conduct the case then petition the congregation to permit these papers to be opened, and the cause to be commenced. Various proceedings now begin, some steps of the process requiring an interval of even ten years ; and should the result of these tedious inquiries be favourable to the pretensions of the deceased, and fifty years at least have elapsed, the congregation decree that he or she is to be beatified. Of course these delays are favourable to the removal of those who would remember that the pretended saints were mere mortals like themselves. It must be further proved that miracles have been performed since the beatification, and when this is done, the enrolment takes place with imposing pageantries and ceremonials, over which the pope presides.

Most offensive and disgusting are such statements, while their wickedness is glaring. I quote them only for the sake of showing that, whatever are the pretences of its adherents, Romanism is unchanged and unchangeable. It is now what it was in former times, and what it will be until the period of its entire destruction. Allow not yourselves then, my dear children, to be imposed on in reference to its character, even for a single moment, by the specious representations

of designing or grossly deluded men, who in our land try to allow only a modified state of their superstition to appear; but in spite of their endeavours, the truth will come out in all its breadth and colouring.

It is a lamentable fact, that a fearful tendency to idolatry is discoverable in man, not only when a written revelation is not possessed, but also when the will of God is plainly revealed. Still, there are the most express and solemn admonitions warning us not to partake of these evils. Had some of the early Christians cast only a few grains of incense on a pagan altar, though they had not uttered a word, this would have saved their lives; but a multitude refused even thus to unite in the worship of heathens, preferring death to the slightest semblance of idolatry. And yet, here are those who call themselves Christians, and claim an uninterrupted descent from those of primitive times, actually worshipping them as martyrs, with the same rites that they refused to perform, and, in consequence, suffered death!

In the objects addressed by Papists, under the character of intercessors, there is one peculiarly prominent; and when we consider the disposition of converts from paganism to mingle and confound their idolatry with the system they espoused, and the willingness of pro-

fessing Christians to meet their prejudices and predilections, we shall not be surprised, however we may be grieved, to find, that many of the rites, and much of the reverence, attached to the female deities of old, were continued in favour of the Virgin Mary. In this, too, they imitated the Arabians, who have always offered a peculiar adoration to the moon. When a part of the country of these people became Christianized, the sect of the Collyridians sprang up in it, offering the same cakes to the Virgin that they had formerly presented to Diana ; invoking them both, however, by the same title, "The queen of heaven." The Romanists have discontinued the offering of the cakes, but have retained the worst part of the heresy. The error with which they are chargeable was promoted, most probably, by the title assigned her, "The mother of God." This was applied without scruple : the famous Nestorian controversy brought this blasphemous appellation into debate, and occasioned the council of Ephesus, in 428, which decided that the term might be used with propriety. The honours offered to the Virgin, more particularly by the Italians, have a remarkable resemblance to the worship of Cybele and of Isis, the same titles and epithets being applied to Mary, as were formerly given to "the queen of heaven." The feast of the

Virgin in the Calendar, commonly known as Lady day, was anciently dedicated to Cybele. In various instances the Virgin has succeeded to the mother of the gods, or to Venus, in the superstition of the modern Romans. The influence of this error is indeed constantly apparent. Pictures may frequently be seen in Romish churches abroad, in which some deliverance is portrayed as being wrought, and where Mary appears peculiarly prominent. Thus a vessel may be observed in imminent peril from a storm, but in the upper part of the representation the Virgin is seen holding the infant Jesus, just as a nurse would a child with which she was entrusted; the consequence of which is supposed to be the security of all on board.

On the high altar of the church of the Recollêtes, at Ghent, there is a picture by Rubens, of Christ, with Jupiter's thunder and lightning in his hand, denouncing vengeance on a wicked world, represented by a globe lying on the ground, with the serpent twined round it, which globe St. Francis appears to be covering and defending with his mantle, while Mary holds Christ's hand, and intercedes to avert his deserved wrath.

A shrewd observer thus adverts to the ordinary feelings of the Italians, in reference to the Madonna: "Are they in danger? Upon her they call for help.

Have they experienced any signal deliverance? To her influence it is ascribed. The most splendid of their processions are dedicated to her glory."

Thus, in the "Garden of the Soul," in the litany of our Lady of Loretto, it is said, "We fly to thy patronage, O holy mother of God; despise not our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us from all dangers, O ever glorious and blessed Virgin." And in a hymn with which the service begins, not only is the Virgin besought to convey "our prayers" to her Son, but she is addressed as follows:—

"O pure, O spotless maid,  
Whose meekness all surpass'd;  
Our lusts and passions quell,  
And make us mild and chaste:  
Preserve our lives unstain'd,  
And guard us in our way,  
Until we come with thee  
To joys that ne'er decay."

The following is a description of the worship of a ship's company in the Mediterranean, by an intelligent and Christian observer. "Soon after sunset, the captain assembled all the sailors in the aft part of the ship to prayers, he himself performing the part of chaplain, while they knelt down and engaged in a service which lasted half an hour. It was chiefly in Latin; but the

sailors appeared well acquainted with the words. After the paternoster, they went through the rosary, or hymn to the Virgin : the master and the mate taking one part, while the whole ship's company chaunted the responses in good time and tune ; while as one tender epithet by which she is addressed was employed after another, there was the cadence of ' Ora pro nobis,'—Pray for us. Other petitions were then offered to various saints for defence from divers evils, and the Virgin was addressed under her different titles, di Loretto, del Carmine, etc."

That each image of the Virgin or the saints is personified and treated as a separate object of worship, is denied by Papists ; but the popular belief to that effect is rather encouraged than discountenanced. Thus one image or picture has more votaries than others. In England, before the Reformation, the image of the Virgin at Walsingham, in Norfolk, was visited from all parts of the country, by persons who had images of Mary in their own towns. This popular belief, which is one of the most dangerous delusions of the Romish superstition, is exemplified to the present day, by the piferari, or pipers. These are generally Calabrese peasantry, and perform, upon a kind of bagpipe, national devotional airs of a peculiar modulation, before the shrines and statues of the Virgin in Rome, during



Christmas. One has an inscription over the alms-box,

*Limosina per ricordo dell anime del purgatorio.*

Alms for remembering the souls in purgatory.

Under the picture appears :—

*Virgine Maria, Madre di Dio, pregate Jesu per me.*

Virgin Mary, Mother of God, beseech Jesus for me.

Burney, in his “Musical Tour,” gives an interesting account of the astonishing variety of modulations the street music of the Neapolitans introduces into the most common airs. These men are, it is said, paid by the government to come in considerable numbers to Rome, and to add to the so-called devotional excitement of the people, by playing one of their airs, supposed by the lower orders to have been played by the shepherds at the birth of Christ.

Dr. Moore, in his “View of Society and Manners in Italy,” has an anecdote in reference to these serenades of the Virgin Mary’s pictures, which shows how readily adoration through images becomes direct image worship. He says :—“Here it is a popular opinion that the Virgin Mary is very fond and an excellent judge of music. I received this information on a Christmas morning, when I was looking at two poor Calabrian pipers, doing their

utmost to please her and the infant in her arms. They played for a full hour to one of her images, which stands at the corner of a street. All the other statues of the Virgin which are placed in the streets, are serenaded in the same manner every Christmas morning. On my inquiring into the meaning of that ceremony, I was told the above-mentioned circumstance of her character. My informer was a pilgrim, who stood listening with great devotion to the pipers. He told me, at the same time, that the Virgin's taste was too refined to have much satisfaction in the performance of these poor Calabrians, which was chiefly intended for the infant; and he desired me to remark, *that the tunes were plain, simple, and such as might naturally be supposed agreeable to the ear of a child of his time of life.*" Such is the popular belief; but how completely it discards all real reference to Him who is thus represented! who is not now, as more than eighteen hundred years ago, an infant; but having suffered for our sins, has "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high," Heb. i. 3, 4. How completely does this representation of Christ as an infant of days, keep out of view the great work of the atonement, and promote the error of applying to his mother as a *mediator* having *authority* over him!

And yet, despite of these facts, which are only a few

from a multitude, a Popish priest will sometimes contend, in the presence of Protestants, that the members of his church never pray to angels or saints, except as to intercessors; and that they never ask them to confer any blessing. Yet what is actually the case? It is, that in all the public offices, from the Purification of the Virgin until Thursday in holy week—a space of about three months—they say, at the close of every day's office, "Make me worthy to praise thee, O sacred Virgin; give me strength against thine enemies." The Latin word here rendered "give," is the one used in all direct supplications to the Divine Being, and is never employed in the sense of *to procure*, or *obtain*. At the close of the Rosary of the Virgin, a collection of prayers said weekly, there is the following address: "Hail! holy queen, mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope; to thee do we cry, poor banished sons of Eve; to thee do we send our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears; turn, then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy towards us, and after this our exile is ended, show us Jesus, O most clement, most pious, and most sweet Virgin Mary." Similar quotations might be given in abundance.

To take, however, a recent instance. In the ency-

clical letter of Pope Gregory xvi., dated August 15, 1832, the following passage occurs, after enumerating various objects to be desired:—"That all these events may come to pass happily and successfully, let us lift up our eyes and hands to the most holy Virgin Mary, who alone has destroyed all heresies, and is our greatest confidence, even the whole foundation of our hope." Thus the head of the Romish church, in the nineteenth century, raises the Virgin Mary to the elevation which ought only to be ascribed to the Divine Redeemer.

Another case of the same kind has occurred within the last few months. Towards the close of 1839, a "mandement" was published, and affixed in conspicuous places in all the churches of Paris, in which the archbishop reminds the clergy of a letter addressed to them at the beginning of the year, on the subject of certain favours received from the pope. It seems that the pontiff had entrusted to him the means of extending more and more the worship of Mary: who is to be specially celebrated for the future, throughout the diocese of Paris, on the second Sunday in Advent, when a plenary indulgence is granted to the faithful of both sexes. That modern Popery is what it was in the dark ages, is evident from the words of the archbishop

in the document referred to : " Such were the graces which we had obtained, and which we regarded as pledges of sanctification and salvation both for you and for us."

It is, therefore, absolutely indisputable, notwithstanding every effort of sophistry and artifice, that the expressions peculiar to the Saviour himself are often applied to Mary : thus she is styled " the gate of salvation ;" and it is said, " There is no one who can be saved, O most holy Virgin, but through thee." In one of the churches at Namur, there is a profane inscription, describing the Virgin as " the refuge of sinners." A similar fact appears in the works of Bonaventure, one of the most celebrated devotional writers of the Romish church, surnamed " the seraphic doctor ;" and still further, a cardinal, canonized two centuries after his death, all of whose productions are in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. He was the author of " The Mary Psalter," which those who are admitted into the " Confraternity of the Sacred Rosary" are recommended to recite once a week. Here, strange and fearful to tell, the name of God is everywhere displaced, that the name of Mary may be inserted ! Here we read, " In thee, O Lady, have I hoped ; let me never be confounded. Receive me into thy favour, incline to me thine ear. Into thine hand,

O Lady, I commend my spirit. Bring unto our Lady, O ye sons of God, bring praise and worship unto our Lady. Let Mary arise, and let all her enemies be scattered. How amiable are thy dwellings, O Lady of hosts ! It is a good thing to give thanks, and confess to the Virgin, and to sing praises to her glory. Praise the Virgin, O my soul, and all that is in me praise and glorify her holy name. Praise our Lady in her holiness ; praise her in her virtues and miracles ; praise her, ye assembly of apostles ; praise her, ye choirs of patriarchs and prophets ; praise her, ye army of martyrs ; praise her, ye crowds of doctors and confessors ; praise her, ye company of virgins and chaste ones ; praise her, ye orders of monks and anchorites : let every thing that hath breath praise our Lady !” What is this but the acme of idolatry ? The litany to the Virgin is regularly included in the Popish books of devotion in England, under the title of “ The Litany of our blessed Lady of Loretto.”

I am sure, my dear children, it has been very difficult for you to restrain feelings of horror at the reading of such statements ; and it is natural to inquire, how the Romanists can vindicate themselves from the charge of the grossest idolatry. They attempt to do this by stating that a distinction is made by them between the

reverence and honour offered to a creature and the worship that is due alone to God, and that these, which are essentially distinct, are never confounded. The assertion thus made cannot, however, be established ; it is not only at variance with all just reasoning, but with numerous and incontrovertible facts. To take an analogous case : suppose certain phrases were adopted in the ordinary business of life, and a stranger were told that on some occasions they meant that a bargain was completed, and on others that it was given up ; would he not be convinced of the absolute impossibility of precision in such circumstances, and of settling with accuracy what was intended to be done ? A piece of money, sometimes reckoned at the value of a farthing, and at others at that of five pounds, would inevitably lead to numberless mistakes. Common sense dictates, that the meaning of terms in the one instance, and the worth of the coin in the other, should be accurately determined ; and that it is only as this is done that they can be properly employed. When, therefore, we are told, that the same tributes offered to Romish saints and to God, are nicely adjusted according to the respective claims of those to whom they are presented, we have a practice asserted without a parallel



in ordinary life, and even directly opposed to its most common conclusions.

Besides, does not reason suggest, that if the departed are to be addressed by those who remain on earth, that they have powers far above the range of merely human beings? If prayer is offered to St. Anthony, or St. Laurence, is it not assumed, that they can hear and relieve? And as it may be presented from the ice-bound shores of Greenland, and also at the same time, from the arid fields of India, and at any moment of our lives, is there not the ascription of omnipresence, omniscience, and of independent, if not almighty power, to the personage thus supplicated? Such a conclusion cannot be evaded. The Romish church enjoins such prayers, and is accountable for all the evils from which they are inseparable, and for the common belief which is encouraged, rather than repressed.

Utterly absurd is the pretence, that there are two kinds of worship; calling that which is given to God, *latría*, and that which is given to the saints, *dulia*. This is an arbitrary use of the terms, which, in the Greek language, are employed promiscuously, to express services performed to God or to man. When they tell us, therefore, that they worship God with *latría*, and

the saints with *dulia*, they tell us nothing but what any other two words in the Greek language would have expressed equally well; namely, that they do not give precisely the same kind of worship to both. But whatever distinction be made in theory, the multitude make none in practice. The saints are honoured as highly as God, and in fact more so, as infinitely more prayers are addressed to them than to the Supreme Being, and without any reference to the Almighty in the words thus uttered.

Still further, not only are Divine attributes ascribed to creatures, but to representations of them in pictures and images. The Romish books contain a prayer, ordered to be addressed to the sacred and miraculous picture of St. Veronica, which is as follows: "Conduct us, O thou blessed figure, to our proper home, where we may behold the pure face of Christ." A foot of St. Peter's statue in his great cathedral at Rome has been worn considerably by the kisses of those who kneel and salute it whenever they pass.

In the church of St. Mary of Impruneta, near Florence, there is a picture of the Virgin, which is profoundly venerated throughout Tuscany, and is carried in procession through the streets of the city, attended by the prince, the nobility, the magistrates,

and the clergy, whenever any peculiar danger arises. Records, confirmed by public inscriptions, are shown to prove that each procession has been productive of benefits, one of which was the ceasing of a pestilence. Thus an inscription was set up in a church at Florence, about a century ago, in the following words : “ There is no one who can be saved, O most holy Virgin, but through thee : there is no one who can be delivered from evils, but through thee : there is no one from whom we can obtain mercy, but through thee. Mary opens her bosom of mercy to all, so that the whole universe receives out of her fulness ; the captive, redemption ; the sick, health ; the afflicted, comfort ; the sinner, pardon ; the just, grace ; the angels, joy ; the whole Trinity, glory ! ”

In vain is it, therefore, to say, that the Virgin or her image are used merely to aid devotion ; they are actually and alike its objects ; they receive the honour due alone to God, who hath said, “ I am the Lord : that is my name : and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images,” Isa. xlii. 8.

Such an invocation of saints and angels is, therefore, expressly prohibited in the word of God. Romanists, it is true, appeal to the Scriptures in its behalf, but they do so without effect. Thus they cite the conduct of

Abraham and Lot, with other patriarchs and prophets, who bowed down their faces to the ground before the angels that appeared to them, but this bending or prostration of the body was, and still is, in many countries, the usual mark of respect and honour to persons of dignity, and is totally distinct from the offering of religious worship; and in most of the instances it is clear that the heavenly Being was the angel of the covenant, the second Person of the Holy Trinity, assuming a visible form. The inspired record bears not the slightest trace of any worship of merely created angels, and it was expressly rebuked and refused, when offered by the apostle John, as I shall presently mention, on these occasions.

The case of Jacob, when he exclaimed, in reference to Ephraim and Manasseh, "The God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads," Gen. xlviii. 16, is no more in point. The Being who fed him all his life long, and redeemed him from all evil, could only be his God. Thus the same patriarch says, after wrestling with an angel, "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved," Gen. xxxii. 30; and in reference to the same fact, the language of Hosea is, "By his strength he had power with God: yea, he had power over the

angel, and prevailed," Hos. xii. 34. It may also be remarked, that when Elijah was about to be taken by a chariot of fire into heaven, he desired Elisha, if he had any favour to implore, to ask it *before* he was taken from him, 2 Kings ii. 9; thus clearly intimating, that when he rose to the innumerable company of angels, it would be too late to prefer a request.

Other facts are equally indisputable. As Peter was entering the house of the Roman centurion, "Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man," Acts x. 25, 26; clearly proving that such honour was, in his case, totally inadmissible. In like manner, when the people of Lystra, full of amazement at the healing of a cripple, said, "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker. Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people. Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living

God," Acts xiv. 11—15. And, if possible, a still stronger case is stated by the beloved disciple, when he says, in reference to some of the visions of the Apocalypse: "I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God," Rev. xxii. 8, 9.

Lucifer said, "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High;" but he fell as lightning from heaven. The prince of Tyre is represented as exclaiming, "I am a god, I sit in the seat of God;" and he was hurled from his proud exaltation, while all around was made utterly desolate. A fear of judgment might well, then, deter a creature from accumulating the guilt of an offence at once so vain and so impious. Moses and Aaron sinned at Meribah, when they implied that a power like that which could work a miracle was their own, as they said, "Must *we* fetch you water out of this rock?" Has not the bold blasphemy of Papal superstition invoked indignation like that which fell upon Herod, when he was "eaten with worms," because he was elated with the flattery, "It is

the voice of a god, and not of a man," and gave not God the glory? We may fully believe that it has done so, though God may not have seen it good to send tokens of displeasure by the like openly manifest judgments.

A prohibition of all creature and image worship was included in the Divine law, as engraven on the tables of stone, and delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai. As the first command requires us to worship none but God, so the second forbids us to make "any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters under the earth," and also our falling down to render any of them homage. And yet, notwithstanding this express prohibition, observe the following fact, as given by the Rev. J. J. Clark:—

"The cathedral, called the Duomo, or Santa Maria del Fiore, is a Tuscan-Gothic edifice, built in the thirteenth century. It is a huge pile, striking the spectator with astonishment at its size, rather than with the grandeur or harmony of its proportions. It is nearly as large as St. Peter's at Rome. The exterior is incrustated with black and white marble; the windows are of stained glass. The interior of the church is dark and gloomy. It is admirably calculated to produce upon a sensitive mind a deep and superstitious effect. A long



line of immense pillars separate the aisles from the nave; and directly under the centre of the dome is the choir. The tribune is surrounded with a balustrade and pillars, designed by Michael Angelo. Near this, upon a throne, is a statue that filled me with horror. It is a representation of the Eternal God! I had frequently before seen paintings intended to represent each of the Persons in the sacred Trinity; but this was the first instance in which I had seen in a Christian temple an attempt to carve the image of the Supreme Being in stone. The view of it struck me with horror. A plainer violation of the second command could not occur."

How, then, do Romanists treat the opposition of the word of God to such practices? They put the first and second commandments together, so that the one against an irreverent use of the Divine name is the second, and that which we call the fourth is the third; and then to make up the number ten, they divide the last commandment into two. Here, however, a fresh difficulty might have occurred. For had it been usual in the Romanists' catechism, to write out each command in full, the sentence against idolatry would still have been pronounced, and it would have been seen at once that the Scriptures prohibited what the church required.

But as it was customary to insert in their books of instruction only the first sentence of each command, that against image worship was easily removed from many catechisms, and that without the knowledge of the people.

A copy of the Divine law thus mutilated, was the only one printed in the manuals of the Romish church prior to the Reformation. The second command was left out of the office for the Virgin Mary, printed by order of Pope Pius v. at Salamanca in 1588, and also of the English office, printed at Antwerp in 1658. At length, the controversy with the Protestants compelled the Romanists to admit it; and so it appears in the abstract of the Douay Catechism, printed in London in 1811; but the two commandments, though at full length, are united as one, and the word “adore” is substituted for “bow down.”

Still, what could not be done well in England, could be accomplished in the sister island, and accordingly, the commandments appear in Butler’s Catechism, printed in Dublin in the same year, and more used than any other of the same description, as follows :—

1. I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt have no strange gods before me.

2. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

3. Remember that thou keep holy the sabbath day.
4. Honour thy father and mother.
5. Thou shalt not kill.
6. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
7. Thou shalt not steal.
8. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.
9. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife.
10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's goods.

The commandments are printed in a like mutilated and summary form, in many popular books of devotion used in England.

One fact, if it stood entirely alone, would utterly condemn all such practices. The Israelites made a golden calf, not, as some have supposed, imitating the Egyptians in the worship of Apis, for after it was formed, they recognised it as "the gods" who had brought them up out of the land of bondage. Aaron, too, built an altar before it, and proclaimed on the morrow a feast to the only true God Jehovah. Yet, on this occasion, their guilt was very great, and their punishment memorable. And their sin consisted, not in adopting the idolatrous worship of a heathen deity, but in setting up a symbolical and forbidden representation of the Most High, and introducing into his worship some of the abominations

practised by heathens. Jeroboam, moreover, is held forth as the man that made Israel to sin, not by compelling them to forsake the worship of Jehovah, but by setting up two golden calves in Bethel and Dan, which drew them aside from the service of Him who "dwelt between the cherubim," and which ultimately became the objects of idolatrous veneration.

## LETTER X.

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THE DOCTRINE OF PURGATORY—MEANS BY WHICH IT IS KEPT  
BEFORE THE MIND—ITS OPPOSITION TO DIVINE TRUTH.

AMONG the miserable sophistries with which Popery abounds, is the doctrine of purgatory, which I now proceed to notice. The tenet is sometimes set forth in the following manner. “After the fall of man from original righteousness, he could not enter into the presence of God till the sacrifice of Christ was consummated. Many died, however, who were good men, and whose spirits would rise to a state of happiness; thousands of the wicked died also, whose spirits would sink into misery: these transactions would take place, too, while multitudes were still living; and therefore it follows, that God was living in heaven, many were living on earth, the wicked were suffering in hell, and the righteous were at the same time, in a fourth place.

If, then, there was a fourth place, a middle state between heaven and hell, prior to the coming of Christ, what proof is there that it is destroyed? There is none. To this, then, the church of Rome gives the name of purgatory."

It would be difficult to conceive a more wretched mode of arguing than this; all is obviously mere assumption, and begging the question, instead of proving the assertion; and yet a state thus totally imaginary, is frequently and prominently presented to the view. Innumerable little crosses and little chapels, for instance, line the way from Chamonix, in Switzerland, to the rich and broad vale of St. Martin, bordered by lofty mountains and forests of pine. Over them are placards respecting indulgences for saying credos, ave-marias, and paternosters. Some of these stations were erected avowedly for the benefit of souls in purgatory; and are inscribed with appeals to the sympathy of the passing traveller, on behalf of those who are supposed to be its wretched inmates.

In France, the stranger may unexpectedly arrive, as I have done, at a cemetery of very interesting appearance. It calls up the declaration, that "in the garden was a sepulchre." Such abodes of the dead contain many handsome tombs, and are planted with evergreens

and flowers. On some of the railings, placed about them, chaplets of flowers are suspended; some withering, and others fresh, as if recently brought thither by one of the bereaved. But even here superstition is strikingly apparent. The graves of the French are usually surmounted with crosses of wood and iron, sometimes eight or ten feet high, and the clusters of them strike at once on the view as the cemetery is approached. Upon almost all of them the inscription may be observed, "*Priez pour le repos de son ame*"—Pray for the repose of his (or her) soul. Nor is it uncommon for persons to be observed kneeling on or near the grave of one of the departed, in obedience to this charge, and with the view—vain, indeed—of hastening the escape of the spirit to the regions of the blessed.

Other instances might easily be given. Thus, the visitor may enter a church on the continent, during the performance of the funeral service. On such occasions, the altars are covered with black screens, having skulls and cross bones painted upon them; the coffin is placed in the middle aisle, with the smoke of incense rising up over it, from a vessel on the floor, while around it many lighted tapers are placed. Sometimes the officers of the church appear in funeral attire at the high altar; and at others, they may be seen surrounding the bier



of the departed. The number of lights appears to depend, like the attire of the priesthood, on the rank and wealth of the deceased. In one funeral I witnessed, a line of soldiers was formed on each side of the coffin, through nearly the entire length of the church ; and it struck me as not a little remarkable, that in the midst of the mass, and that too repeatedly, the voice of an officer was heard directing the military movements of the men, whose muskets, as brought to the ground, jarred the stones of the aisle on which they were standing. A salver, to receive offerings for further masses for the deceased, is generally presented, not only to the bereaved, but to all present. But common as such offerings are, it appears they are not very costly. I have watched attentively, more than once, persons of respectable appearance, examine their purse with some difficulty on the approach of the priest, and then drop in a single sous—a coin which in England would be a halfpenny !

To mention a similar case:—On entering the garden attached to the church of the Dominicans at Antwerp, the eye is caught by one of those singular contrivances of superstition, called Calvaries. In the corner of the area, at the end of the path leading across it, rock is piled upon rock to a great height, in rude and artificial, yet imposing grandeur, and statues of pro-

phets, apostles, and saints are ranged around. On the top of the rocks is a representation of the Saviour upon the cross; below is another of an angel receiving, in a chalice, the blood as it flows from his side; and beneath the level of the ground, an image of Christ, pale and death-like, appears in the sepulchre. In a gloomy recess to the left are the figures of wretched beings, with the most ghastly expression of countenance, shut into a place of torment by massy bars, and writhing in agony in the midst of flames. The object of all such representations is to excite compassion, and to raise contributions to pay the priests for saying masses, in which the names of the departed are to be privately mentioned by the priest, and which it is supposed, when enough are said, will help the souls from purgatory. In reference to this imposition, some other curious facts may yet be stated.

Thus, in some monastic establishments in England, the altar, placed on the right or left hand side, and dedicated to the Virgin Mary, is considered a privileged altar, from the pope having granted an indulgence, so that every person who celebrates mass upon it, with the design of obtaining an indulgence, will obtain one of ten, twenty, or perhaps a hundred days for every such service.

If the prior—the head of the institution—has received an intimation of the death of any individual, it is announced either after dinner, or after supper; when each of “the religious,” as they are called, is directed to say a certain number of offices, and priests a certain number of masses, determined by the nearness or remoteness of the connexion existing between the deceased and the monastery. Sometimes a considerable sum, (for instance, sixty pounds,) has been sent for this purpose; if, therefore, there be ten priests in the monastery, the following order may be issued by the prior, on his rising, “Let each priest say ten masses, as soon as possible, for the repose of the soul of —, a patron (or patroness) of the order.” In such announcements, however, special care is taken that a word may not be uttered as to the sum of money received. All such donations are concealed, also, from those without—externs, as they are denominated—as scrupulously as possible. Yet to this hour they are frequent and large.

A short prayer is sometimes added at matins, in these establishments; and this occurs when an office is about to be recited, with any *particular intention*; that is, as papists say, that the service may benefit an individual; for instance, by obtaining safety in a journey, promoting the welfare of a deceased friend or relation,

or by diminishing the term of his remaining in purgatory. In this way, a Romish priest has received money from twenty persons, in sums varying from two shillings and sixpence to a pound for each mass, to be said for the repose of a friend, a child, a husband, or a wife. But as he might find he had more masses for the dead than he could conveniently pass through, he sends a trifling sum to a retired priest in a monastery, with the message, "Say so many masses for my intention." According to this plan, if he has received twenty pounds for twenty masses for the dead, he perhaps sends five pounds to the inmate of the institution; and the masses he offers "with an intention," are held to be of equal importance and value with those presented by the priest who thus engages his services; while the two agents in this engagement alike receive a pecuniary benefit!

In the same way the permission of the pope has been granted, so that if a priest were paid for ten thousand masses, which he could not possibly repeat, he may say one, with the intention of its being equal to a hundred or more, and thus rapidly clear off his engagement! These are indeed wretched subterfuges; but, doubtless, departed spirits are as much benefited by their neglect, as they would be were the number of masses that are purchased actually gone through.

You have already been told, my dear children, that the sale of indulgences aroused the spirit of Luther; but it is equally true that the traffic has been carried on in later times, and it is so even now. In the year 1709, a Bristol privateer captured a vessel from Spain, on her way to America, having on board upwards of three millions of indulgences, to be sold at various prices, from twenty pence to the poor, to eleven pounds to the rich. In the year 1800, a Spanish ship was captured by Admiral Harvey, near the coast of South America, in which were some large bales of paper, valued in her books at £7,500. On examination they proved to be made up of large sheets of paper, some printed in Spanish, and others in Latin, but all bearing the seals of ecclesiastical courts in Spain or at Rome. There were also indulgences for various sins mentioned in the Roman Catholic rubric, and for permission to eat flesh on fasting days, with the price marked on each, varying from half-a-dollar, to seven dollars. Some Dutch merchants at Tortola bought the whole for £200, hoping to introduce them among the Spaniards of South America, and to clear an immense profit thereby.

“I was surprised to find,” says a traveller, “scarcely a church in Rome that did not hold up at the door the tempting inscription ‘Indulgentia plenaria’—plenary

indulgences. Two hundred days' indulgence I thought a great reward for every kiss bestowed upon the great black cross in the Colosseum; but that is nothing to the indulgences for ten, twenty, and even thirty thousand years that may be bought, at an exorbitant rate, in many of the churches." Nor are such purchases limited to them. The ecclesiastical history of France records, in a long series, the indulgences granted by various popes, of a plenary remission of all sin, and that for thousands of years, for certain prescribed services. By whom, it may be asked, can these be available? Bellarmine, the great champion of the Popish cause, after mentioning some of the most atrocious offences which can be committed, adds, "Without doubt, the popes had respect to such as these, when they gave indulgences for ten or twenty thousand years;" thus, in fact, holding out exemption from punishment for the greatest crimes.

It has been acutely said, "We are told, that 'it is easier for a camel to go into the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven;' but, at Rome, at least, it would seem to be difficult, nay, impossible, to keep a rich man out." Equally powerful is money, in professedly spiritual matters, wherever the influence of Popery extends: nor does it shrink



from owning its efficacy ; thus, at the close of a list of sums for which certain supposed advantages might be obtained, it is added :—" Note well : graces and dispensations of this kind are not conceded to the poor ; because they have no means, therefore they cannot be comforted ! "

The offers thus avowedly made, of spiritual good, at the pecuniary cost of the applicant, or in consequence of some exercise or service through which he passes, plainly appears to be directly opposed to the language of the gospel. " Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money ; come ye, buy, and eat ; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." " Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." " The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

What a contrast is presented by these terms to those in which indulgences are offered ! Nor can it be doubted that they have been productive of great evil. According to the testimony of Bellarmine, men who were guilty every moment of their lives, of perjury and blasphemy, received pardon from the pope and his



clergy, and indulgences, too, for thousands of years. Surely, then, this practice must operate as an encouragement, and even as a permission, to commit sin !

To all statements in defence of this false doctrine, there is a satisfactory reply :—The doctrine of purgatory has no foundation in the Bible, and therefore to treat of deliverance from it, is like dealing with the shadow of a shade. And whatever tends to obscure or conceal the doctrine of the punishment of sin, as stated in the word of God, impairs or sets aside one of the means to be used for bringing men to repentance. Yet this is done by the church of Rome. He who thinks he can obtain absolution on confession to a priest, and in addition, an indulgence for the remission of temporal punishment, can have little or nothing to fear, though he lives as he pleases, and his pleasure is that of unchecked depravity.

Purgatory, like many parts of the Romish system, is derived from heathenism. It was held by many in the ancient world, that all creatures are parts of the Supreme Being, separated indeed for a time, but destined to return, like drops into their parent ocean, and only hindered on their way by the stains contracted from the pollution of matter. These stains were considered to be worn out by the action of fire and the power of

pain—a notion which is apparent in the doctrine of purgatory.

The language of Anchises to his son conveys the same sentiment :—

“ Nor, e'en when death dissolves the mortal ties,  
The gross contagion with the body dies :  
But on the soul the growth of sensual years,  
By nature's strict necessity, inheres.  
Hence are they sentenced to atoning pains ;  
Till just infliction shall erase their stains.  
Some are suspended on the viewless wind :  
Some deep in roaring waters are confined ;  
And some are exercised with fire's sharp power :  
Each soul must tarry its expecting hour.  
Then are we sent to range Elysium's sweets :  
And few we are who gain those blissful seats,  
Till, his full orb complete, long toiling Time  
Has cleansed the foulness of concentered crime ;  
And left, in all its native radiance bright,  
The ethereal sense of elemental light.” \*

In his dialogue, entitled “Phædo,” Plato affirms, that when men enter into the invisible state, they are judged. Those who are neither truly virtuous, nor consummately wicked, are said to be carried away to the lake Acheron, where having suffered the punishment of their unjust deeds, they are dismissed, and then receive the reward of their good actions : those who, on account of

\* The Eneis of Virgil, by Symmons.

their great sins, are incurable, are cast into Tartarus, from whence they shall never escape ; while those who have committed curable sins, and have repented, must also fall into Tartarus, from which, after a certain time, they will be delivered.

In both these passages we have a very exact description of the purgatory of Papists ; the curable and incurable offences of Plato, according precisely with the venial and mortal sins of the Romish church. By mortal sins they understand those which are worthy of eternal death ; but these are few, and some of these are explained away by a subtle casuistry. All other sins are venial or pardonable ; expiated, in part, by penances here, and partly by the pains of purgatory hereafter. After all, the notion of purgatory is gross and palpably false. Its abettors admit the spirituality of the soul, and yet they suppose it can be purified by fire, just as if it were a material substance ! This singular imagination overturns the fabric. Purgatory is physically impossible.

Pagans considered money to be necessary in these circumstances, and thus they put a piece of money under the tongue of each of the deceased—the fare of Charon for ferrying the departed spirits across the river Styx ; and profitable indeed have Romanists made the

fable in not asking for an obolus, but by cherishing a rapacity which knows no bounds.

Let us take the evidence once more of the Rev. D. O'Croly. "The doctrine of purgatory has an intimate connexion with the traffic in masses. The piety of the living seeks to mitigate the sufferings of their departed friends. This piety is carefully nurtured by the interested clergy. The feast of All Souls, November 2nd, is the critical period for the performance of this neighbourly and philanthropic duty. Nothing, then, is left untried to interest the faithful in behalf of the suffering souls in purgatory, who, it is said, can be most efficaciously relieved, or extricated altogether, by the aid of masses, which are at once impetratory, propitiatory, and expiatory. This is a portion of the 2nd of November doctrine, and which is inculcated by every means that avaricious ingenuity can devise."

It is unnecessary to add more respecting a doctrine so evidently a tissue of falsehood, tending to promote crime, and harden the heart; and supplying, as it does, a most powerful engine for exerting their authority to the priesthood of Rome.

## LETTER XI.

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NUNNERIES—THE ROMISH DOCTRINE OF MERIT UNSCRIPTURAL  
AND INJURIOUS—OBJECT OF ENGLISH MONASTERIES.

HAVING thus far proceeded in the accomplishment of the proposed task, it remains to exemplify still farther the spirit of Popery. One prominent feature presented by it is that of self-righteousness, and to a brief illustration of it the present letter shall be appropriated. It appears very strongly in the seclusion of women in cloisters or nunneries, under a profession of devotedness to a religious life.

The entrance on this course is called “taking the veil;” and the unconscious victim, generally about fifteen years of age, is, in Spain, the object of special attention from the community that she prefers, who constantly address her by the name of “bride.” Attired in a splendid dress, and decked with the jewels of all her family and friends, she takes public leave of them, visits on her

way to the convent several other nunneries, to receive expressions of admiration from their inmates ; and even the crowd, as she passes, utter their blessings. As she approaches the church of her monastery, the priest who is to perform the ceremony, meets her at the door, and conducts her to the altar, amidst the sound of bells and musical instruments. Her dress as a nun is now blessed by the ecclesiastic, and after embracing her parents and nearest relatives, she is led to a small door next to the double grating, which separates the nuns' choir from the body of the church. A curtain is drawn while the abbess cuts off her hair, and strips her of all her worldly ornaments ; and, on its removal, she appears surrounded by the nuns, bearing lighted tapers, her face being covered with the veil, which is fixed on the head by a wreath of flowers. She afterwards appears behind the grating which separates the visitors from the inmates of the convent. In some instances the parting visit is omitted, and the sight of the novice in her veil is the last which for a year is allowed to her parents. On the day she takes the vows they see her again, but never to behold her more, unless, indeed, when she is laid in the grave.

In some nunneries there is little or no rigour, apart from the loss of all personal freedom, whether

bodily or mental ; but in others, young and delicate females are exposed to a life of privation and hardship. Their dress is a tunic of sackcloth, tied round the waist with a knotted rope. No linen is allowed, either for clothing or bedding ; its substitute is the coarsest woollen, even during the burning summers of the south of Spain. In winter, the only addition is a mantle of sackcloth, while their feet, without socks or stockings, but shod with sandals, are exposed to the piercing cold. A band of coarse linen, bound tight six or eight times round the head, is worn by the Capuchin nuns, in remembrance, it is said, of the crown of thorns ; and this band is not allowed to be taken off, even in fever. Among these, all communication between parents and children ends in taking the vows.

In France and other parts of the continent, nuns may often be observed, many of them assiduously engaged in teaching children, and visiting the sick : while some of the convents are frequently open to public inspection. Several friends of mine visited that of St. Jean, in Bruges, and to them the dress of the nuns presented an unaltered feature of the Romish dominion over mind and conscience. In the gallery of the gloomy chapel, which is paved with black and white marble, the inmates were chanting in a manner which sounded dolorous and servile, and any



thing but the accent of happy, cheerful piety. Inglis, an interesting traveller in many countries, on describing a visit he paid to a convent in Spain, says :—" I was presented with wine and cake. I shall never forget the taste of that cake ; it seemed to me to taste of the tomb—crumbling in one's hand like something touched by the finger of decay." And the feeling of which he was conscious would, doubtless, be that of many.

That there is often much to endure in such circumstances, might be shown by many facts. Thus a writer, himself once high in rank as an ecclesiastic of the church of Rome, but afterwards enlightened to see its errors, says :—" I had a sister, amiable and good in an inferior degree. . . . At the age of twenty, she left an infirm mother to the care of servants and strangers, and shut herself up in a convent, where she was not allowed to see even the nearest relations. With a delicate frame, requiring every indulgence to support it in health, she embraced a rule which denied her the comforts of the lowest class of society. A coarse woollen frock fretted her skin : her feet had no covering but that of shoes open at the toes, that they might expose them to the cold of a brick floor : a couch of bare planks was her bed, and an unfurnished cell her dwelling. Disease soon filled her conscience with fears ; and

I had often to endure the torture of witnessing her agonies at the confessional. I left her when I quitted Spain, dying much too slowly for her only chance of relief. I wept bitterly for her loss two years after, yet I could not be so cruel as to wish her alive."

"In the province of Biscay," says Inglis, "females profess at a very early age; their noviciate generally commences about fifteen, and at the expiration of a year they take the veil. A nun must carry into the convent about 30,000 reals, (300*l.*) and to La Merced and Santa Monica, considerably more. I ascertained, from a source of the most authentic kind, that three-fourths of the nuns who take the veil at this early age, die of a decline within four years." He thinks the climate and situation of some of the convents account, in part, for this mortality, but adds, "I should incline to attribute a greater influence to causes more immediately referable to the unhappy and unnatural condition of those who are shut out from the common privileges, hopes, and enjoyments of their kind."

At a convent in the north of Italy, a fearful catastrophe occurred some years ago. A father determined to compel his daughter to take the veil, to which she was strongly disinclined; but as she was treated with great brutality at home, she at length consented; yet no

sooner had she pronounced her vows than she requested a private interview with him at the grate of the convent ; and being left alone with him, killed herself before his eyes, and cursed him with her latest breath. This, however, is but one of the many narratives of horror which are well authenticated in connexion with a seclusion so unnatural and injurious.

All idea of escape is carefully excluded. In Italy the bondage of a convent is rarely broken through. And why? A woman who persisted in returning to the world, would be visited with the severest reprehension ; her family, considering themselves dishonoured, would refuse to receive her ; her friends and acquaintance would scarcely associate with her ; the finger of scorn would point to her :—she must take the vows, or die. Nor should the fact be overlooked, that, according to her superstitious teachers, she would by so doing endanger her salvation, or render it impossible. Fear supplies a powerful motive to even a hated incarceration, and often the only one.

In England there are at present many convents. Mrs. Mary Wiseman, a nun of the Flemish convent of St. Ursula, in Louvain, established a house of this kind in the year 1609. Its inmates were governed by a prioress. At the French invasion, in 1794, they fled

out of the Low Countries, and were received by a friend in England, till a residence was hired at Amesbury in Wiltshire, where they resided till the year 1800. Since then they have dwelt at Spettisbury House, in Dorsetshire. Another convent is at Cannington, near Bridgewater ; and there are others at Salford, near Evesham ; Liskeard, in Cornwall ; Princethorpe, near Leamington ; Westbury, near Bristol ; and at Taunton, in Somersetshire.

It will be naturally asked, after such an enumeration, which might be much extended, What is the great inducement to this prison-like life ? To this it may be replied, that the chief reason avowed, is derived from the imagination, that such a course is meritorious in the sight of God. Vain and delusive, indeed, is such a hope. They who have believed in God are to be “ careful to maintain good works ; ” but of these a life of quietude or endurance in a convent, is not likely to be productive. For works to be good, they must be right in principle, and spring from love to God ; and though there may be cases where this is exhibited in such circumstances, it is assuredly not owing to any human devices, for “ the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” There is abundant reason, however, to think, that this love is

but rarely possessed by the inmates of convents, of whom it may generally be said, that “they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” “Without faith it is impossible to please God:” in the exercise of this principle the whole trust of the soul is fixed in Christ; and in direct contrast to it, is the conduct of all who look for the enjoyment of the Divine favour to their own doings and sufferings.

The doctrine of merit, as held by the Roman church, is calculated to fill the mind with pride and presumption, yet the influence of it appears continually. On a tombstone at Cork, is the following inscription:—“Sacred to the memory of the benevolent Edward Molloy. He employed the wealth of this world only to secure the riches of the next; and leaving a balance of merit in the book of life, he made Heaven a debtor of mercy!” Such is a specimen of popish supererogation, of which there are innumerable instances: but a far different spirit is discovered by that individual who, receiving the testimony of the gospel, is anxious to adorn it in all things. Cowper has well conveyed the

feelings of such a one, when describing him as saying, as he beholds the Redeemer :—

“Since the dear hour that brought me to thy foot,  
And cut up all my follies by the root,  
I never trusted in an arm but thine,  
Nor hoped but in thy righteousness divine;  
My prayers and alms, imperfect and defiled,  
Were but the feeble efforts of a child;  
Howe'er performed, it was their brightest part,  
That they proceeded from a grateful heart.  
Cleansed in thine own all-purifying blood,  
Forgive their evil, and accept their good;  
I cast them at thy feet—my only plea  
Is what it was—dependance upon thee.”

It is equally certain, that while relying entirely on the mediation of Christ, for works to be good, they must accord with the only unerring rule—the revealed will of God. But in what part of the Scriptures is the life of nuns described and enjoined? Assuredly, no trace of it can be found in the inspired volume. There the range of female duty appears, not in seclusion, but in society; and all who abandon the engagements of life for the cloister and the cell, do so alike in defiance of the arrangements of the God of nature, and the doctrines, precepts, and examples of Divine revelation.

## LETTER XII.

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ENGLISH MONASTERIES—THE DESIGNS OF ROMANISTS—THE  
OFFICERS, INMATES, AND APARTMENTS OF THE BENEDICTINES  
—THE PRACTICE OF DUPLICITY.

It has been already perceived, that the course taken by nuns is unsupported by the oracles of God; and in showing that this is also the case with those of the other sex, who incur similar obligations, some remarkable features of “the man of sin” will yet be fully exposed. Various orders of monks long since settled in this country. The dissolution of their institutions, however, began in the year 1312, and by the 27th and other acts of Henry VIII., more than three thousand were completely suppressed. The motive to this was not, it must be admitted, altogether a pure one. The houses and wealth of the monks were confiscated, indeed partly on account of the crimes of individuals, but chiefly to break the power of the monastic orders, and to gratify the cupidity



of the monarch and his courtiers. Cardinal Wolsey had set him an example, by suppressing several monasteries to apply the revenues to his public establishments. But what first urged Henry against the monks, was their determined opposition to his authority, and their efforts to keep him a vassal to the pope, even preaching rebellion for this purpose. Now, what papists had meted to others, was, in some small degree, measured to them again ; the spoilers of kings became to others a spoil. Over the monastic institutions that remained, a considerable change passed. Prior to the Reformation, the monks of Glastonbury and other places took their vows, and spent the remainder of their lives in their respective edifices. Some of them were ordained priests for the services of the monastery, but others were merely its inmates, assisting in its choir, and engaged in domestic and manual occupations.

So adverse, however, were the circumstances of the Benedictine monks during the latter years of Henry VIII. and Edward VI., that out of this once flourishing fraternity only one remained. The last and solitary link of a long extended chain, was Robert Buckley, alias Father Sebert, then at the age of ninety, and moreover the inmate of a prison. To him five or six young men applied, and received at his hands the habit of the

Benedictine order through the window of his dungeon. They then proceeded to Douay, where an English Benedictine monastery and college had been founded by Cardinal Pole, a maternal cousin of Henry VIII.—“a man,” says Sharon Turner, “whose combination of talents, sensitivity, and venom, reminds us of the Hindoo tradition, that there is a dangerous serpent amidst the jungles, that bears in his forehead a beautiful ruby.” His insinuating qualities greatly contributed to the success of his pestilential influence.

In various parts of the country, numerous relics of ancient monastic institutions may still be traced. Of the many that formerly flourished in Canterbury, for example, the principal was the abbey founded in the beginning of the seventh century by Augustine, in conjunction with king Ethelbert, for monks of the Benedictine order. The remains are a gateway entrance—a beautiful specimen of the decorated style of English architecture, with two embattled octagonal turrets, adorned with canopied niches, and ornamented with bands, mouldings, and cornices; between these turrets is the entrance through a finely pointed arch, in which are the original wooden doors, richly carved. At present there are three institutions for monks in England; of which two belong to the Bene-

dictines : one at Downside, twelve miles from Bath, and the other at Ampleforth, eight miles from York ; the other belonging to the Jesuits. The design contemplated by these establishments is worthy of particular attention, for their inmates are intended, after a preparatory course, to cast around them the seeds of Popery, and they will stand ready to thrust in the sickle when the harvest has grown up and is ripe.

The fact is, that England is not, like Spain, or France, or Italy, a Roman Catholic hierarchy, daring openly to assume authority over all other men : here this corrupt system, though rapidly gaining ground is not paramount ; it has till lately been quite in abeyance ; and consequently, the bishops are styled vicars apostolic : that is, receiving their commissions from the pope, they are considered as missionaries from the court of Rome among infidels or unbelievers, and hence they take their titles from foreign places. Accordingly, the vicar apostolic of the western district is styled the Bishop of Siga, and the vicar apostolic of the midland district, the Bishop of Cambyropolis. In Ireland, which is a Roman Catholic hierarchy, and where Popery has always been dominant, the titles of its prelates are derived from the places where their functions are exercised, as the Archbishop of *Dublin*, or the

Bishop of *Meath*. Another point of difference is manifest between a vicar apostolic and a bishop in his own right; the former can be removed at the pope's pleasure, but the latter cannot be, except on being convicted of gross immorality. .

Whatever may be the views entertained by others, it is unquestionably the object of Papists to regain their dominion which in England has been lost; and they expect speedily to do so. This will appear from one fact, but little if at all known to Protestants. The endowments of several bishoprics were originally the property of the Benedictines, and taken from them at the time of the Reformation. As, therefore, they consider them to have been unlawfully wrested from their hands, they regularly appoint officers to these bishoprics, and to all the other monastic property extant, at the chapter of their order, which is held every four years. The disposition sometimes pretended by the pope, and other members of the Romish church, to conform so far as possible to the wishes of those with whom they are at issue, may be traced to the hope of ascendancy, which is still tenaciously cherished. Were the fears of many, therefore, to be realized, and England, by the decision of its rulers, to return to Popery, each of these officers appointed by the last arrangement, would proceed *at once*

to his allotted station. In this convulsion to others, no difficulty would arise to them; no question would remain to be proposed, no collision of claims would occur; but according to plans steadily pursued from the Reformation to the present time, the whole ecclesiastical property, however reluctantly surrendered by Protestants, would be simultaneously, and as a matter of course, appropriated by Papists. Nothing less than the absolute supremacy of their church, in things temporal as well as spiritual, will satisfy Romanists.

Meanwhile, they cherish hope that it will ultimately be theirs, and refuse no effort likely to secure its realization. Others may be lukewarm, or heartless, or indifferent, but they are always watchful, zealous, and persevering. Their avowed intention is, by missionary labour, to bring back the sheep who have strayed from the fold of the Romish church; and for this, monastic institutions are sustained, under the direction of the vicars apostolic already mentioned, who reside in this country as the representatives of the pope. The primary field of labour for English Benedictines is at home. On them it devolves to celebrate mass, to teach the doctrines of their church in public lectures, to hear confession, to pronounce absolution, and to administer the Romish sacraments of baptism, penance, the eucharist,

matrimony, and extreme unction, in private and public Popish establishments, whether rising from recent effort, or vacated by the inroads of death.

An officer, called the president, has equal authority over the nuns and monks of the same order. He is supreme, both as it regards the priors of monasteries and the abbesses of convents, as well as the provincials, each of whom is a senior priest presiding over the regulars who may reside within his province. To him it belongs to see that an adequate pecuniary provision is made for each priest. A new chapel cannot be erected within his district without his permission ; nor can any material change be effected but in accordance with his pleasure. He holds office in the general chapter, and if found efficient may be re-chosen every four years during life. A provincial is generally supplied with funds for the use of his district, and on these a young priest going on the mission will frequently draw.

The Jesuits, disciples of Ignatius Loyola, another celebrated order of the Romish church, it may here be observed, have a college at Stonyhurst, in Lancashire ; and according to their engagements, they stand ready for service in any part of the earth, at the command of the pope, to the upholding of whose authority they are especially devoted. With this fra-

ternity, it should be remarked, originated “the Society for propagating the Faith,” whose missionaries compassed sea and land, and encountered hardship and danger in every form to gain accessions to the dominion of Rome. Wherever they found churches avowedly Christian, they demanded immediate submission to the papal power, and to hesitate or refuse was, if possible, punished as rebellion against authority. In China and Japan, and wherever they were unprotected, they practised successfully the arts of insinuation; in other parts where power could be exercised, as in Paraguay, they made converts at the point of the sword. In their case the corrupt maxim has been carried out to its utmost possible extent—“The end sanctifies the means.” Never, my dear children, may this be admitted by us. We are taught not to do evil that even good may come. May we always track with undeviating step, the plain path of truth and righteousness.

A monastic institution, even in England, includes a considerable establishment. First in rank within it is the *prior*, for at present there are no abbots here. Once possessed of the latter distinction, it is borne by the individual for life; but a prior is elected for each institution every four years, and at the end of his term, if not approved, his office may be terminated for ever.



He is taken from the rank of senior priests, and his authority in the monastery is great, there being no appeal from it, except to an officer without the establishment, called the president, or from the president to the pope, or from the pope to a general council. On him it devolves, with the advice of his counsellors—other leading members of the institution—to direct and control all its affairs, both external and internal. In his own room he is always ready to be consulted by the senior or junior brethren, to give counsel, to listen to complaints, and to correct what are deemed abuses. He appoints the various officers to manage the religious and secular concerns of the institution, applies to the bishop to administer “the sacrament of holy orders” to any who are studying in his monastery, is responsible to a general chapter for the state of the establishment over which he presides, and receives its approbation or censure according to his discharge or neglect of his duties.

Next in station is the *sub-prior*, who incurs a similar responsibility: he is the general assistant of the prior in his various engagements, and his *locum tenens* in all cases of absence, either in visiting his friends, or occasionally administering offices in other monasteries, or convents.

To them succeed the following officers, described in the order of their standing :—The *junior master*, frequently the professor of theology, who has to watch over the morals, give attention to public offices and the studies of the junior brethren, (the rank of the inmates for the service of the Romish church, till they have completed their theological course,) and especially to promote, it is said, their spiritual interests ; to him each of them has daily to go to ask for his morning collation, except it be a fast ; and with him, as well as the prior, he has to consult as to any absence from studies.

The *procurator* provides for the whole establishment ; he buys all that is required, receives all that is paid, sells whatever is to be disposed of, arranges with the stock-brokers any monies in the funds, transacts secular business with merchants both at home and abroad, and keeps in his possession all clothes and food, books and papers. He is distinguished from other officers of the institution, in the general permission he has to go, at any time, to any part of the monastic estates ; to a distance, even for business, he cannot go without permission of the prior. The accounts of the monastery in his hands, are subject to the examination of the prior ; and every four years to that of the president and general chapter.

In monasteries, where there is a college, a *prefect* has charge of the boys, and is, in fact, head master of their school. On him it rests to watch over them in the hours of recreation, to preside at their table during the time of dinner, to superintend their studies, to guard their morals, to inflict any corporeal punishment, and to sleep among them in the first or second dormitory. He always walks about this apartment, after their retirement to rest, for two hours, that no conversation may take place ; without his permission, no boy can enter it during the day ; he attends night prayers, pronounces his benediction, conducts the collegiate students to their dormitory ; and after this, no one can leave it without his acquiescence. In the morning, he gives one signal for them to rise out of bed and to dress, and a second for them all to go down into the study room ; when, on their assembling, he commences prayers. Should a boy be absent from them, he is accountable to the prefect ; and for the omission the prefect is responsible to the prior : and if any complaint is made by a parent, as to any mental or moral deficiency in the education he superintends, he is amenable to a council of the house, which is formed of its principal officers.

The *sub-prefect* superintends the boys in his absence, presides at their table at breakfast and supper,

has charge of them in the second, or minor dormitory, in which he sleeps, and takes the place of the prefect in his absence, incurring by his office a similar responsibility.

The *sacristan* has charge of all the sacred vessels and vestments; and on him it devolves to have wine and candles prepared for the altar, to vest the officers for their appearance before it, to attend to all the arrangements of the chapel, to take care that a lamp is continually burning before the tabernacle; and when perpetual adoration is observed, to have the consecrated host constantly exposed, and persons, by two and two, watching before it during the day and night; to see that candles are regularly supplied, and also to show visitors and strangers what is committed to his trust.

The *guest-master*, whose duty is to receive strangers, to provide for their meals and rest, and to pay them the utmost attention and courtesy during their stay; which, as mere strangers, is allowed to continue for three days and nights.

The *cantor*, or *chaunter*, superintends the choirs, gives directions as to the tunes in which the psalms shall be chanted, orders the public singing during the celebration of mass, commences each of the hymns and

psalms ; and is, in fact, the leader of the choral band, and responsible for the proper celebration of this part of the monastic service.

The *confessors* are those appointed by the prior, or a general council of the house, to receive the confessions of its inmates ; nor is any one allowed to go to any other priest in this character, without the permission of the prior. Other persons have authority to receive the confessions of those that live out of the monastery, as well as the servants of the establishment.

The other inmates of the institution are “the brethren,” who have passed through the profession—a ceremony like that of nuns when taking the veil—and who are, in consequence, denominated “the religious ;” and those who are preparing for this distinction, called “novices.” It may here be also remarked, that the brethren are divided into two choirs, the first and the second ; in the former, the prior presides, and in the latter, the sub-prior. The choirs are, however, of equal rank, the whole number of the brethren being divided between them ; but there must be in each one or more of “the professed” to constitute it a regular choir, which it would not be, if formed of novices alone.

As curiosity will naturally be felt to know something

of the interior of such an institution, it may be observed, that an English Benedictine monastery is a strong, stable, spacious edifice, including a centre and two wings; the former being appropriated to the chapel, and the latter to the various apartments of the establishment. Sometimes rooms for guests appear in the front, while gardens, shrubberies, and pleasure grounds serve as a promenade and a recreation for all. The nunneries of this country may be mentioned in similar terms. The circumstances of their inmates, at the time of the French revolution, were precisely the same as those of the monks already mentioned; they were natives of this country, bringing to it as much of their property as they could secure, and establishing themselves in various places.

On the door of the monastery being opened, the hall appears like that of other Popish edifices, from its statues of saints; at the upper end of it may be observed one to the person to whom the institution is dedicated, by whose name it is called, and whose protection is daily solicited. On the left, is one of the founder of the order, as St. Benedict, with whom originated that of the Benedictines; and on the right is a statue of the Virgin Mary.

Proceeding to the library, we enter a spacious and

lofty room, containing, in appropriate compartments, copies of the Scriptures, in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, in various editions, with numerous commentaries; the works of the Greek and Roman fathers; the decrees of popes, from Gregory I. to Gregory XVI; the canons of councils, from that of Nice to that of Trent; the volumes of ancient and modern theology, including Romanist, Protestant, Mohammedan, and Arian polemical writers; together with a large assemblage of others in every department of literature and science; and the whole apparatus of natural philosophy. In some instances, there are various literary curiosities, with others of a different character.

The refectory is a commodious and well-lighted apartment, sometimes adorned with statues or paintings of saints, anchorets, and hermits; appropriated entirely to the taking of meals. The members of the Romanist church, it may be remarked, are bound to keep certain days, called "days of obligation," as the Circumcision, (1st of January,) the Epiphany, (6th of January,) and the Annunciation, (25th of March,) more strictly than even the Lord's day. What a substitution is this of the institutions of man for the appointment of God!

At the head of the refectory is a recess, with a



reading desk, where the hebdomadarian, as each of “the brethren” holding the office for a week, is called, reads at dinner-time a chapter from the Old Testament; and at supper, one from the New Testament. When the portion of Scripture is ended, he waits for a moment, and if the prior gives one tap on the table, it is the signal for the reading to be continued from Roman Catholic biography or ecclesiastical history, when the whole meal is taken in silence. Should the prior give two taps, they are the signal for conversation, when the reader retires from his desk, and takes his seat at the table. Silence during the hour of dinner is generally observed three days in the week; and at supper it is almost invariable.

In the “Lives of the Saints,” a work of high repute among Papists, and of which much use is made during meals, we constantly discover the common and awful error of the Romish church, that suffering is highly meritorious. To take merely one case, as a specimen of a multitude, we may refer to that of St. Macarius. It is said, that for seven years together, he lived only on raw herbs and pulse; and for the three following years, contented himself with four or five ounces of bread a day, and consumed only one little vessel of oil in a year. When the monks were preparing to

keep Lent, he is described as standing in a private corner, and passing the whole time without eating, except a few green cabbage leaves on Sundays! Happening one day to kill a gnat inadvertently, which had been biting him in his cell, he is represented as reflecting that he had lost an opportunity of suffering, and as devising a singular compensation. Hastening forth, he went to the marshes of Sceté, abounding with great flies, the stings of which pierce even wild boars; and there he remained six months, exposed to their fury, and “to such a degree was his whole body disfigured by them with sores and swellings, that when he returned, he was only to be known by his voice.” It is scarcely necessary to remark, that the principle on which such statements are made, or on which any such sufferings are endured, is egregiously wrong: it is assumed that they are acceptable before God; but how can this be, when the Most High has not required them; when, in fact, they are opposed to many parts of Divine revelation; and when their direct tendency is to set aside the only way of access and salvation—the mediation of our Lord and Saviour?

Prodigies abound in such publications. Optatus relates, that a bottle of holy oil was thrown out of a window by certain persons, in order to break it; but

though it was cast from a very high place, yet, being supported by angels, it fell on the stones uninjured. A blind man touching the bier on which lay the bones of Saints Geroasius and Protasius with a handkerchief, and then applying it to his eyes, is described as receiving his sight. Prudentius affirms that a white dove was seen to come out of the mouth of St. Eulalia, and to wing its way upward when that martyr expired ; at which prodigy, he says, the executioners were so terrified, that they fled, and left the body. On similar authority it is said, that the apostle Peter, in a vision, comforted St. Agatha, healed all her wounds after she was cruelly tortured, and filled her dungeon with heavenly light !

Such is a small sample of a work which a long string of archbishops and bishops of the Romish church publicly sanction, and of which they affirm, that they are glad to express their ardent desire, that a copy of it were placed in the hands of every family of the numerous people committed to their care. “ We presume to say,” is their language, “ that the ‘ Lives of the Saints ’ is an historical supplement to the Old and New Testaments ; an illustration of all that God has revealed, and of all the sanctity which his divine grace has produced among the children of men.” On this work a

very different verdict might justly be pronounced, its direct tendency being to produce and increase the superstition and infidelity which are so often apparent in the garb of Popery. True piety is originated and sustained by a totally different instrumentality—the truth as it is in Jesus—which such publications are intended to set entirely aside.

We pass, now, from the refectory, where works of this kind are constantly read; to the calefactory, so called from its having a fire from November to March. It is a large room, in which “the brethren” are required to meet at least twice a day, after dinner and supper; at the close of which, the prior, followed by them in regular order, proceeds thither at once. Here is the place of conversation and recreation, and of intercourse between the monastic community and strangers: here, too, the newspapers are read, and curiosity, but rarely repressed, is gratified, by learning the state of the country, and of the world at large.

Each of the professed has a cell, a small plain room, containing a bedstead, with a wool mattress, a pillow, blankets, sheets, and a coverlid; a chest of drawers, a desk, two chairs, and a few other trifling articles, and always a crucifix, and pictures of the Virgin Mary and other saints. All are confined to their cells during the

day, except when engaged in the chapel at meals, or passing the hours of recreation after dinner or after supper. In these places silence is preserved, nor can any one go into the cell of another, except on pain of mortal sin! When the last service of the day is concluded all must retire to their cells, every light must be extinguished before ten o'clock, and not a sound must be heard until the appointed officer calls them to commence the service of the next morning at half-past four.

Having adverted to the feasts of the refectory, it may be stated, that the calefactory is the scene of other indulgences. Here the person last professed, and who is called the semi-abbot, waits on his brethren, keeps up the fire, snuffs the candles, asks permission of the prior for wine or punch, and distributes either or both when his plea is successful. Here, however, ingenuity is sometimes required; but if a good excuse is not at hand, one of an inferior kind is resorted to. Thus, a brother of one of the professed has a child born, and he will give punch to celebrate the birth, from money which he has in the hands of the procurator which in some cases may be considerable; sometimes, guests will proffer it from certain intelligible hints which are thrown out; and invariably the request is urged when

a member of the establishment is visiting the monastery from his mission. Should he be too poor to give it, some member of the house, having more money, will supply it, while he, in his own name, obtains permission for the indulgence.

Admitted to these scenes of sensual gratification, it may probably be asked, How does it accord with the vow of poverty which is taken by monks, in connexion with that of chastity and obedience? Professing to have nothing, how is it that, so far as the gratification of the palate extends, they have every thing? The answer is, that a nice distinction is drawn between holy poverty and beggarly poverty;—the one involving abject destitution, the other according with the phrase, with which all the monks of this kingdom are familiar, “It is our duty to get all we can, and to keep it.”

A print may often be observed in the shops of London, representing a large present of fish, flesh, and fowl to the inmates of Bolton Abbey, on which the receiver looks with no common complacency; and precisely the same feeling is discoverable by many of his successors. Indulgence is nominally given up, but practically retained.

Here Popery appears the same as it was in former days; and the similarity will continually strike on the

mind as we consider this anti-christian system. But before we pause again, it may be remarked, that the evasions so commonly resorted to, in reference to what is accounted sacred, as well as to what is secular, is totally opposed to Christian truth, and prepares for any devices of the father of lies. Let us aim to follow in the steps of one to whom the testimony was borne, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!"



## LETTER XIII.

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INDUCEMENTS TO A MONASTIC LIFE—HISTORY OF A MONK—THE  
POSTULANT—THE NOVICE—THE PROFESSION.

THE surprise naturally felt at the increase of the monastic order, and at its continued reinforcement when weakened by defection or death, will be allayed by the following considerations. Roman Catholic parents are solicitous, like others, for what they consider the advancement of their children. This many suppose will be secured by engaging them in the service of the Romish church. Superstition has long invested such engagements, in their minds, with peculiar attractions. It is maintained, that when, in celebrating the Eucharist, the priest utters what are called the “words of consecration,” the wafer and the wine are actually changed into the body and blood, soul and Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ; and the power to do this, as it is considered, or, properly speaking, the opportunity of pre-

tending to do so, is often eagerly coveted, and esteemed highly honourable.

A knowledge of the superstitious reverence with which Romish priests are often regarded, will exhibit one reason for parents desiring that their children should rise to this rank. Accordingly, in the hope that some of them have what is termed "a vocation of God," the parent sends them to the school which is connected with the monastery, where association is favourable, as in other cases, to the desired impression. Here, amidst many in similar circumstances, they not only pass through the ordinary routine of education, but also a frequent trial of the temper; and when a disposition appears to obedience and self-control, whether constitutional or superinduced, the hope of the parent is encouraged by those in authority, and the youth is urged onwards. Only conceive of the exercises of the mind being restrained from the earliest time within very narrow limits, and of certain objects only being kept before it, and no wonder will be felt that the desired result is frequently obtained.

Other cases occur, in which this is the consequence of the false but flattering statements addressed to the young, and by which proselytes have been made from the ranks of Protestants. To hear, from time to time,

of entire exemption from worldly care, by which multitudes are harassed, bowed down to the earth, and even borne to the grave—of the ample and abundant supply of every necessity without effort or cost—of constant association with persons of similar character and pursuit, reciprocating all that is kind, and generous, and noble—and of securing these great advantages, merely by a resignation of the will, and attention to the simple routine of prescribed study, has on some minds considerable effect. It is true, as we shall hereafter perceive, that there will be much to excite repugnance, and produce suffering; but all such circumstances are scrupulously concealed. The hook is hidden by a glittering bait, the chain by a rich and flowing robe. Thus the attractions of this world are exhibited; for ambition will hear that the youth who enters his noviciate, may rise to the rank of a professor, a prior, a cardinal, or a pope; while other feelings are excited as the attention is directed to the priestly office, with the assurance that the merit accumulated by all acts of self-control, mortification, and sacrifice, shall receive a proportionate and eternal reward. It is needless to dwell here on the delusion that is thus practised. In a worldly point of view, it will be found that the prizes of this lottery are few compared with its

blanks ; while to promise happiness or glory in heaven on the ground of any such services, is to reject the full and plain testimony of revelation, and to incur the tremendous guilt of making God a liar, 1 John v. 10.

The process preparatory to becoming a monk or friar, differs in different countries. I will describe it as practised in our own land, where, of course, every thing is as much as possible avoided that can give an unfavourable impression of this mode of life. As you will perceive, great attention is paid to keep out of sight those gross and objectionable features of the monastic state, which appear with little disguise in countries where the public mind is subjugated to the church of Rome, and where the priesthood and monastic orders are accounted a superior race of men to their fellow mortals, and not subject to the same laws and regulations.

When any one is to be prepared for the "English mission," as it is called, he goes, on entering a Benedictine monastery, according to the invariable rule, into the collegiate part of it, and gives his attention to classical literature. Having made there some progress, he asks permission of the prior to take the habit of the order, and thus become a postulant. Several months now elapse, when the prior and council of the house,

formed of its other chief officers, determine to accede to his request, and accordingly intimate that he is to prepare for receiving the habit, by “a retreat,” which is described as a period spent in “silence, prayer, the examination of conscience, and also in the general confession of the sins of the life.”

To assist in this exercise, there are tables of sins, which may be committed against the ten commandments of the moral law, and also against the requirements of the Romish church. He is charged to confess the nature of his sins; not only external acts, but thoughts and feelings, suggestions and desires, and also the number of his several transgressions. Unable, however, to do this—for Popery is full of subtleties and subterfuges—he is directed to state how long he has lived in the practice of any iniquity, and then to guess its frequency in a week or a year. Having thus arrived at some conclusion—a correct one is impossible, and an erroneous one, to any but a Papist, condemns itself—he goes to one of the confessors appointed by the prior, or a general council of the house to receive confessions, while any other is absolutely forbidden—thus they secure to themselves the possession of every secret of their inmates; he receives some advice, has a penance enjoined, and when abso-

lution upon its performance is granted, he is admitted to the communion of the Romish church.

His preparation for the habit being now completed, the event is notified to "the brethren," who assemble in the chapter-house, a room near the chapel, which is used for religious conferences and other purposes, at the upper end of which the prior is seated. An officer of the house, called the novice-master, now leads him in; when walking to the middle of the apartment, he prostrates himself in the presence of the prior, who immediately after gives a tap on the table, and as he rises from his knees, proposes the question, "*Quod petis, frater carissime?*"—What seekest thou, dearest brother? To this, he answers, "If it appears expedient to the Blessed Virgin, and to you, I desire to receive the habit, and to live under the rule of St. Benedict." The prior then proceeds to address him: he speaks of the difficulties attending a monastic life; affirms the absolute necessity of entire resignation to the will of superiors, and of prompt and cheerful obedience to all their commands, without a moment's inquiry whether they are right or wrong; and then expatiates on the importance of a moral course, in which he describes the virtue of humility, or rather of the entire prostration of the intellect and the conscience, as

pre-eminent, which is the very chain and shackle of his system.

At this requirement of implicit submission—to superiors, be it observed, however great and ruinous their errors ; the substitution, in fact, of the authority of man for the authority of God, the very core of all anti-christian superstition—an ingenuous mind might at once be horrified, and refuse to advance, but the previous treatment passed through guards against the probability of such a result. The ceremony therefore proceeds. At the close of his address, the prior beckons to the postulant ; when, as he kneels in his presence, he asks what religious name he has chosen, or whom he has sought as his patron saint : he mentions one, (for instance, St. Francis,) on which, he calls him by the name of that saint, and puts on him the habit. This is a large round gown, with deep, full sleeves, hanging to the knees, with a scapular, which is put over the head, and reaches to the feet both behind and before, and a hood with which the former may be covered. The postulant now kisses the hand of the prior for acceding to his request ; and, rising from the ground, receives from him a kiss on the cheek, by his applying one side of his face to a side of his own, and which is denominated “the kiss of peace.” He then rises from his knees,



gives to each of "the brethren" a kiss in the same manner; and at the close of the ceremony, takes the name of a novice, and is conducted by the novice-master into the noviciate, when the inmates of the house come to congratulate him, and to wish him, what they call, erroneously indeed, "persevering grace."

He now enters on a new scene, in an apartment where all in the same circumstances reside together. On the novice-master it devolves to try the tempers and dispositions of those under his care, in order, it is said, to know whether they have a calling of God to the monastic life. No one must pass through the gates without his permission, or being accompanied by one of the elder, or professed brethren. To such a one, a novice must not speak, except permitted; and he must be treated, together with every officer of the house, with the greatest deference and respect.

As a novice, the individual has to rise at four in the morning, and to attend with the professed brethren the early service of the chapel: this lasts about two hours, when twenty-five minutes are allowed to make his bed, and arrange other matters in the novice's dormitory. On the ringing of the bell for the morning collation, the master enters the noviciate; and taking

his seat, all of them fall on their knees in his presence, and proceed to confess any minor fault which is considered as not amounting to a sin ; for every one described as a sin must be acknowledged at the confessional. Faults of this lesser kind are committed, when a novice speaks to one of the professed brethren during that morning, violates the law by which silence is imposed during certain hours, is vexed with one or more of his associates, or has been irritated by any penance enjoined on the previous day.

The "chapter of faults," as it is called, is followed by various penances. Should a novice display a want of kindness to his brethren, he may be required to clean their shoes during the whole of the year. If great delicacy of taste appears, something unpleasant is appointed ; or when the individual has asked, as is the general practice, whether he may take his morning collation, he has been told that he may have for it a plate of snow. Or if the novice-master has observed any one help himself to more than the usual quantity, as to a larger piece of cheese, he will say perhaps, "O brother ! I think you are rather fond of cheese ; you will therefore be so kind as to do without any more for three months to come." The mortification may also be increased a day or two

after, by the master offering a piece of cheese to a novice under this prohibition ; when, should he attempt to take it, a penance will be enjoined, as that of going on his knees, and watching others while they partake of it, or prostrating himself for half an hour in the chapel—an act of degradation which prepares him for the performance of others.

It may be supposed to be well, when the novices have no faults of which to accuse themselves ; but the master will then probably enjoin a penance for pride. Sometimes he will accuse them sarcastically of offences of which they have not been guilty ; and if these are denied, he will expatiate, in the same style, on their innocence, and order them to do penance for the want of humility, or the manifestation of self-will.

Raillery, than which nothing more blunts the kindly feelings of the heart, is indeed a frequent means of mortification, and one often followed by what is still more trying. To give an instance :—The novices in turn make the fire in the noviciate ; and some, of course, are not at first very expert at this domestic occupation. This was the case with a brother named Bede, who, after studying for seventeen years in a different order, had to light the fire in the noviciate of a Benedictine monastery. He commenced operations by clearing out the

grate, but then he formed a stratum of large lumps of coal, placed some sticks on this, covered them with shavings, heaped a quantity of ashes on each hob, put a small piece of lighted candle beneath the coal, and left the room. To his surprise, his failure was manifest on his return; but other emotions succeeded when brother Bede was thus addressed by the novice-master: "Hey, brother! how clever you are! what a splendid fire! It is fit, you see, for any purpose to which it can be applied. How greatly do we all enjoy its light and its warmth! How clear and bright, too, you have made the grate! Surely you are much indebted to your mother, or some kind aunt, for your great skill. Successful indeed have they been in their instructions!—Brother Bede, as a penance, you will prostrate to-day in the chapel for an hour."

A still more offensive course is pursued, for the novice-master frequently obtains advantage of his pupils in unguarded moments. Speaking to any one, in the most familiar manner, and encouraging him to open his mind, he will notice expressions which fall from the lips without due thought, and turn them, whenever a convenient opportunity occurs, against the unsuspecting pupil. Sometimes, hard labour is required as a penance; at others, what is absolutely ridiculous, and

therefore proportionately annoying. One novice was directed to plant a walking-stick in the earth, and to water it every day till it grew; and other cases might be mentioned equally frivolous.

Nor are instances wanting in which there is much severity. Any attempt at self-exculpation is immediately, and perhaps heavily punished, as by kneeling for half, or sometimes three-quarters of an hour; without any support, which is often extremely painful. Sometimes the penance consists in the offender prostrating himself at the door, for all the brethren to step over him, or kneeling to each of them as they come out of chapel, or acknowledging that he is a poor, wretched, guilty creature, with an entreaty of their prayers in his behalf. No doubt such treatment, at which every ingenuous mind, free from the fetters of gross superstition, instinctively revolts, is likely to answer the requirements of a church which triumphs alike over the body and the mind, degrading the individual to a mere machine, to do nothing, or only its own work; but it is manifestly opposed to the proper dignity of a responsible being, the true end of existence, the formation of a holy character, and the promotion of the glory of God.

With his full share of the trials alluded to, the

individual pursues his studies of the rule, or order of life, prescribed by St. Benedict. The Latin term for this is *regula*; and hence every *regular* priest is a monk or friar belonging to some order, while a *secular* is not a monk, and does not belong to any. He is also employed in reading what are called spiritual books, in examining his conscience, and in frequently repeating prayers, to ascertain, as he calls it, but in our view most improperly, what is the will of God.

At the end of the first three months of his noviciate, the prior sends for "the brethren," and in their presence the novice prostrates himself, asking their permission to persevere. If the prior has discovered any thing inimical in his spirit or conduct to the requirements of the Romish church, he now states the fault, and enjoins a penance: and the novice has to repair to him again, and on bended knees ask pardon for his offences: should this not be the case, the request is granted, as a second application is at the end of six months, and also a third, about four months after.

The stimulus to all this is the hope of being professed. The novice hears continually of the merit accruing from mortification; he is told that all he endures will better prepare him for society, should profession be refused; while, should this great object be gained, the path is

fully opened to great honour on earth, and to great glory in heaven. It is declared that he is thus promoting the best interests of religion, and laying up a rich store for the world to come. Often does the novice-master quote the passage, "He which converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins;" telling him, by a flagrant perversion of the word of God, that this is the multitude of his own sins, while "they that turn many to righteousness," he declares, by a perversion equally gross, "shall shine as the stars for ever and ever!"

Meanwhile, much ignorance of his own system prevails; he hears nothing of penances done by the professed: he supposes, indeed, that none are required, for the fact is subtly concealed. Some doubts may arise in his mind as to different parts of the Roman Catholic system, but on mentioning them to the novice-master, he affirms that they are suggestions of Satan, and ought to prove that his vocation is of God; while, in reality, they may accord with Divine truth, and be calculated to deter from its perversion and rejection. To such statements, however, it is added, that the novice has only to wait his passing through the theological course, when his objections will be fully obviated. But vain indeed are such promises. For a fair treatment of objections



rising in a mind which retains only a portion of its natural ingenuousness, the novice may wait, but he will find that his church has other and sturdier weapons to quiet them than statement and argument.

It is the practice of an English monastery to dismiss a novice at the end of three or six months, when it is determined that he shall not be professed. When, however, it is intended that he shall be, he receives further advice as to the difficulties lying in his path ; and again the necessity of unreserved and unwavering obedience is urged, not only to his superiors for the time, but to their successors, as long as he shall live.

On the assembling of a "council of the house," he is recommended by the novice-master as a proper person to be received into the order of St. Benedict. Each one of "the professed" is then separately called before the council to express his opinion of him ; such communications being secret and confidential. The judgment thus pronounced being in his favour, it is decided that he shall be professed : but this is known to him only from the result. It may here be remarked, that the "general chapter," held every four years in England, devolves peculiar authority on an officer called the "president." To him, during the term of his power, every regular priest engaged in the service of the Popish church in this

country must yield implicit obedience, as well as all the ecclesiastical students in its monasteries. The prior consequently writes to the president for permission to profess the novice ; but in reference to this application, profound secrecy is observed. Indeed, he is kept for many weeks in a state of painful suspense, without daring to mention his suspicions or doubts to any one, or to ask a question as to the probable issue.—But here we will once more pause : painful, and often disgusting, are the details of a monastic life, yet it is well to know what is occurring even in our own land, that our feelings and efforts may have the stimulus of fact, not of imagination.

Whatever tends to throw light on the Romish system is of value. To use the words of the Rev. E. Bickersteth : “ Popery has that wherewith it can meet every desire of the natural heart, and soothe every anxiety about the soul : for the literate, it has prodigious stores of learning ; for the illiterate, it has its images, pomps, and shows ; for the self-righteous, it has its innumerable ways of external service ; for the most devout, it has its unceasing prayers ; for the musician, it has the most exquisite chaunts ; for the painter, the most splendid efforts of human art ; for the imaginative, all the visions of fancy, its gloomy cloisters, lights, and processions,

and incense, and beautiful churches with painted windows, and priests with splendid garments and varied dresses. To quiet the conscience, it has doctrines of human merit, and works of supererogation ; to alarm the indifferent, it has fears of purgatory ; to raise the priesthood, they can make a little flour and water into a god, and will themselves worship what they make. To give ease to the conscience of the man of the world, and the lover of pleasure, each sin has its indulgence and penance. All men at times are under fears of God's wrath ; their conscience is touched, they are in anxiety ; and at such times Popery comes in, and gives them a sop, that satisfies for the moment, and sends them into the sleep of death. It covers every lust, it calms every fear. It is the devil's cunning device of twelve hundred years' growth, for leading countless myriads to perdition. *Let us not be ignorant of his devices."*

## LETTER XIV.

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THE NOVICIATE — THE PROFESSION — SEVERITY EXERCISED —  
EXILE, THE PENALTY OF DISOBEDIENCE—CLOSE OF A PRIEST'S  
EARTHLY CAREER—PRACTICE OF CELIBACY.

IN the last Letter, a part of the Romish system was developed, by tracing the postulant and the novice through the various steps of his course; it remains, therefore, to observe him when attaining the realization of his hopes, but which frequently issues in bitter disappointment.

Informed that he may now proceed, the novice-master directs the novice to enter his "retreat"—requiring, as before, eight days' silence. After the lapse of five days, and the making a general confession, he is called on by the prior, who inquires if he wishes still to persevere. On replying in the affirmative, he kneels in the presence of the professed brethren, and asks

their prayers. The time is then fixed for his profession to take place.

On the morning of the day appointed, high mass is celebrated. As yet, his dress has been only the cast-off garments of some of the professed, these are now placed on one side of the altar; and a new habit on the other, which, as the full monastic costume is not now worn in England, is merely a gown and cassock, nearly resembling those of the English universities. Led by the novice-master into the chapel, where the brethren are assembled, and prostrating himself in the presence of the prior, who is seated at the high altar, he gives him the usual signal to rise on his knees, and then proposes the question, "What do you want?" He answers, "Permission to persevere in my holy resolutions." The prior, according to his system of ignorance, superstition, and delusion, then addresses the novice on the trials of the monastic life, and expatiates on the pleasures resulting from the mortification of the senses, and from living in sacred seclusion, and also dwells on the rich compensation in heaven for all the discipline he will have to undergo. "Dost thou then," he continues, "notwithstanding all this, persevere?" The novice answers, "Yes;" and is then directed to read the form of profession in the Latin tongue, which has been already prepared.

A translation of this document is as follows :—" In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen, in the year of my nativity —, on the — day of —, I brother —, of —, in the county of —, in England, promise before God and his saints, stability, reformation of my manners, and obedience, according to the rule of our most holy father (St. Benedict,) under the very reverend —, of the English congregation of the same order, our holy father the general president of the same order, and to his successors in this monastery of St. —, in —, in the county of —, of the same congregation and order, in the presence of the very reverend —, prior of the monks of the same monastery, to the faith of which thing, this schedule or petition, written and undersigned with my hand, in the year and day of the month above added." Here is a solemn engagement of unreserved submission to human authority, which, with the Bible in our hands, it may be said none ought to exact, or if exacted, none ought to yield.

As soon as the person being professed has read this form, the black pall—that which is used for funerals—is brought in, and spread on the ground before the altar ; on this he prostrates himself ; and the sides being thrown over him, he is hidden from the view of all present. The brethren now commence chaunting " the

Long Litany"—an appeal to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, for mercy on the person making this profession, and to the Virgin Mary, to the angels, and to many saints and martyrs, virgins and confessors, imploring their prayers in his behalf. At its conclusion he rises, proceeds to the left hand of the altar, on which the mass is still being offered, and there takes the oath of obedience to his superior and his successors for ever, and also of chastity and poverty. Placing his left hand on the crucifix, he signs his name in full to the oath he has taken, prefixing to it the declaration, "*Tango cruce*m"—"I touch the cross."

Immediately after this act, the recital of which is deeply painful, from a conviction that such vows are frequently broken, and that the consequences of keeping them are also fearful, the following vow is taken:—"I brother —, in the place of —, in the county of —, in England, promise, vow, and swear, before God and his saints, that I will go to the work of the English apostolic mission, and return again whenever and wherever the most reverend president of our congregation shall judge expedient, and shall command: I touch the cross." To this are appended the

(Name of the professed.) —

(Names of witnesses.) —



The state of a slave has frequently called for the sighs and the tears of true philanthropy : are they not then demanded by the spectacle on which we are now looking ? Where can bondage be more complete ? Henceforth the professed is the mere instrument of those to whom, whatever be their dictates, he has declared he will be, in body and in mind, entirely subject.

The mass is now concluded, and he returns to the noviciate, to spend the remainder of that day, and the two following, in silence so profound, that he is forbidden to hear his own voice, even in devotion. After three days have elapsed, he receives the wafer, or host of the sacrament, and is then conducted by the novice-master to the calefactory, where he is introduced to each of the assembled brethren, who having offered their congratulations, proceed to the prior, and ask relief from study for the whole monastery.

Two facts should be remembered as to this act of profession. One is, that since the year 1829, in which the Emancipation Bill was carried through Parliament, the profession of monks has been prohibited in England. Still it occurs, and sometimes every year ; the precaution being taken of performing the ceremony now described either during the night, or at an early hour in the morning, when only the initiated are present.

The other fact is, that the sum paid by each individual, at or about the time of profession, is £600, though this is remitted, in some instances, from the hope that special service will be rendered to the Romish mission in England. Gold has, however, in all monasteries and nunneries a powerful attraction. Strong indeed must be the case that allows it to be declined.

It might be supposed, that an appetite for gain would be satiated by the sum just mentioned, but still there is the cry, "Give, give;" for immediately after profession, the individual is required, according to an invariable rule, to resign, in a testamentary form, the whole of his property; not only what he has, but what may be his at any future time; property, in fact, whether afterwards arising from heirship, from gift, or from accumulation in the service of the mission, to the monastic establishment. As, however, it is against the English law to do so specifically, the plan is, to surrender such property to two members of the Benedictine order, so that the professed is unable to make any gift, without rendering an account to the prior, or, in the prospect of death, to bequeath any thing he has possessed.

Exorbitant as this requirement is, more still is demanded,—shame—shame that an intelligent and ac-

countable being should ever yield it, for he must tender to his president, every four years, a statement of all he has received, what he has used, and how it was spent. So long, too, as he is the inmate of a monastery, he has to give in annually, "a bill of poverty," including all he has about his person, or in his cell, even to a pen, a nail, or a small piece of string; and in such subjection is he to his superior, that the prior may demand his key whenever he thinks proper!

On being professed, he takes his station at the end of the choir of junior brethren, presided over by the sub-prior. The places at meals are occupied in the exact order of profession; were, indeed, a boy of ten years of age to be professed in May, and a man of sixty in June, the former would have the precedence.

The whole of the "Daily Office" now becomes binding upon him; thenceforward it is regularly to be passed through under pain of mortal sin; and in it are included the following services:—matins, the nocturnes, prime, the hours, and vespers. Matins was originally celebrated at midnight, and this order is still kept up in name. Each of the professed is called to it by the semi-abbot, the individual who has last passed through the ceremony lately described, at half-past four. This is done by a knock at the door of every cell, and the

salutation, "*Benedicamus Domino*"—"Let us praise the Lord;" the answer given by the waking brother being, "*Deo gratias*"—"Thanks to God." Immediately after each one rises and repairs to the chapter-house, where they wait till the great bell of the monastery announces the time for the morning office to begin. The prior now joins them, and a signal being given by a nod, all enter the chapel, walking two and two, each one making a genuflexion before the tabernacle, where the wafer is, but where God is not, and then proceeding to their respective choirs.

At the close of this service, as prescribed by the Roman Breviary, the first nocturne, or the first hour after midnight, follows, and is succeeded by the second, third, and fourth; prime, the break of day, is next celebrated; to this follows a service for the third, sixth, and ninth hours. Vespers commence at four o'clock in the afternoon, and complin is the conclusion of the daily office. All these services, it may be remarked, are conducted regularly by some severity. Should any one enter the chapel after the commencement of the first psalm in the office, he knows the consequence. If a junior, he must fall on his knees at the bottom of the choirs; if a senior, he must stand in a bent and humble position, till he has a signal from the prior to take his place. It

is at the discretion of that officer to allow him to advance to the choir, or to require him to remain as at first, until the service is concluded.

Should a mistake be made by any one in reciting the office, so as to occasion a moment's interruption, he has to leave his place at the close of the part in which the error has been committed, and to kneel between the choirs, or in some other conspicuous place, as a penance for his fault, and in that posture he remains during the pleasure of the prior. It may also be stated, that scarcely any portion of an office is recited without the commission of some slight error, and the infliction of the corresponding penance.

Other inflictions frequently occur. Should any one not enter the refectory till after the first grace is concluded, he must, if he be a junior, silently ask pardon on his knees, and remain in that posture till the prior allows him to rise; or if he be a senior, he must make an acknowledgment of guilt, by standing in a bent posture, till the prior bids him take his place. The signal is given in these, as in other cases, by a nod. When dinner is finally ended, the prior leaves his place, and each of the brethren follow in the order of their profession. The same rule is observed on ordinary days at supper. On fast days, at evening

collation, instead of saying grace, a chapter of the rule of the order is read, as is also a small portion of the works of Thomas à Kempis, or some other writer, after which each one eats his portion in silence, and then retires.

An exemption from self-infliction must already have been observed. But it is still endured on the continent. Even now, the Trappists, during the season of Lent, and at other penitential times, frequently retire to the dormitory, strip off their clothes to the skin, take a scourge of cords filled with knots, and flog themselves, while they repeat, in slow recitation, the Miserere psalm, the fifty-first of the Protestant version. To such a course, the studies and active services of the Benedictines are decidedly inimical. The practice, moreover, is generally discontinued in this country. Cases have been known in which it has been observed by some nuns, but in these it has been reprehended by the bishop; and an abbess has been threatened with the withholding of absolution, if she allowed its continuance. In England the bondage of the mind, is the point aimed at by Popery in every process; at present it cannot often venture further.

Yet let it not be supposed, that the whole chapter of severity has been perused. For should one of the

professed be charged with any dereliction of duty, such as neglecting the engagements of the choir, speaking disrespectfully of his superiors, going beyond bounds without permission, eating or drinking in any person's house while thus without the line of demarcation, protracting his absence after the time appointed for his return, keeping money in his possession, entering the cell of a brother, or taking anything to his own cell to eat, which he has no right to do—for these and similar errors, he is exposed to serious consequences.

In all such cases, he may be summoned into the presence of his superiors; in many of them a council of the house will be called, and, convicted of the offence, he will be subjected to penances, such as being confined to his own cell for a week, living on bread and water, being shut up in a dark room, and allowed to see only the brother who supplies him with a scanty portion of food, saying the whole of the office on his knees without once rising, or kneeling publicly in the refectory for three successive days without food.

This part of the system may be further illustrated by a fact. A junior master, under a strong and unwarrantable feeling of hostility, treated one of the professed with marked disregard, and annoyed him by all possible means, until at length the injured party, mor-



tified beyond endurance, declared that "he did not care" for his oppressor. For that act he was compelled to ask pardon on his knees from his offended superior, to live for three days in the week on bread and water, and during each day, for three weeks, to kneel during the hour of dinner. Yet this was not enough. Various and repeated statements of the master produced and kept up the impression that the young man was exceedingly refractory, and further severe penances followed in rapid succession. Earnestly did he desire to leave the monastery, but his wish was not allowed to be realized.

At length he was abruptly removed from the establishment. The president gave him a letter of recommendation to a similar institution in France; and thither he went, with the full expectation of sharing all the privileges of its inmates. But in less than three days after his arrival, a second letter was sent from the president in England to the prior of the college, directing that he should be transferred to a monastery that was named, in one of the most remote and sequestered parts of France, and to this he was forthwith removed.

Eighteen months afterwards a letter was received from him, addressed to the monastery in England, wherein, in the most pathetic and forcible language he

could command, he implored permission to return within its pale. To his entreaties, however, a deaf ear was turned, nor was he allowed to leave the foreign monastery, when the writer last heard of him, though he has as great a right to all the liberties of the establishment as any around him. All he had suffered here had been indescribably surpassed in the place of his exile. He stated, that for a year and a half he had neither tasted nor seen "flesh-meat, fish, eggs, cheese, or butter." "Why, then," it may be asked, "does he not contrive to escape?" The answer is: He has been trained in the belief, that to do so would plunge him in eternal ruin; and that idea rivets for life, unless indeed the light of Heaven should break on his mind, the iron chain of his soul's bondage. In many cases, however, the chain at last is broken, but it is by the party becoming an infidel! From the individual referred to the glad and soothing tidings of the Gospel in its fulness and freedom have been studiously withheld.

Nor is his, in this respect, a solitary case. Could multitudes reject the idea, that beyond the pale of the Romish church there is no salvation, they would pass over its boundary at once; but fear forms the bond which holds them in the most awful captivity.

Here, however, it should not be overlooked, that

effort is invariably made to keep penance secret. An individual may be removed from England into France, and be absent from the monastery many months, and yet those who have been his most intimate companions may not be able to ascertain where he is. Direct communication between them is absolutely impossible, for the prior reads all letters that come to the monastery, or are sent from it.

One great point to be observed in the discipline of monastic institutions, is the unqualified and slavish submission of the inmates to the will of superiors. A tendency to this is discoverable at the outset; and it is perseveringly promoted in various ways, till the object is accomplished. Effort is in all cases indispensable; as invariably it includes severity, and where an ordinary measure will not suffice, it is increased, as we have seen, to the pains and penalties of banishment. The will *must* be reduced to abject thralldom, whatever the sacrifice to the individual, or the exertion to those under whose authority he is placed.

Another object sought to be effected, is the preparation of the individual for his future course. Should he discover any particular talent, special effort is made that it may operate for the extension of Popery. Hence men of ability are selected for the work of instruction and

discipline. Each professor has his own sphere of instruction. In other branches of knowledge he may be comparatively little interested, but in that which is indicated by his station and name, he is to be perfectly at home. Here his opinion is regarded as decisive and oracular. Thus the professor of theology has made that science the study of his life ; and though he may be a tyro in natural philosophy, he is thoroughly acquainted with the delusive system of Popery.

A third object constantly kept in view, is the inculcation of artifice, whenever the interests of Popery are considered to render it desirable. The charge is frequently heard by the inmates of monasteries, " Never make known the whole of our system to externs ;" meaning, by this phrase, Protestants as well as Papists. A *regular* will, in consequence, be reserved towards a *secular* priest, as one of a body with which his own is not always on the most friendly terms ; while the secular commonly looks on the regular with a jealous eye, because he is not so much under the control of a bishop.

In other cases there is more secresy. Not long since a number of candidates for orders applied to a well-known Roman Catholic bishop. In the examination of

one of them as to priestly absolution, the question was proposed, "Has a priest power fully to absolve all who truly confess their sins?" The answer was in the affirmative. Another inquiry was, "Is this power in fact his own, individually?" To which the candidate replied as follows: "It is; it becomes his on the ground of free gift: every priest at his ordination receives that power when the bishop lays his hands on him, for he derives it by an unbroken succession from the apostles, to whom it was said, 'Whosoever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.'" "But," it was rejoined, "would you explain the matter in this way to externs?" "No," said the candidate, "my answer to them would be, This power is not my own individually; God alone can forgive sins; but I am appointed on his part to pronounce the absolution or retention of sins." This statement was highly commended by the bishop; he directed that such a course should commonly be pursued; and thus the candidate, with those around him, were charged in words to deny what they actually held, and to give an explanation of a doctrine of their church diametrically opposed to what it is in point of fact. How does this remind us of Belial, in Milton's poem:

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He seemed  
 For dignity compos'd and high exploit :  
 But all was false and hollow : though his tongue  
 Dropped manna, and could make the worse appear  
 The better reason.

Such a course needs no comment. It calls at once for the most unqualified condemnation. No possible circumstances can extenuate such duplicity. Were it admissible in one case, it would be in two ; and if in two, in ten, a hundred, a thousand, a million : nor could any barrier be placed to arrest a practice which would overwhelm in utter ruin the dearest interests of man.

But to proceed to other facts. As soon as the professor has passed through a certain portion of theology, and the required permission has been given by the president, he is presented by the professor or the prior to the bishop for examination. Points of theology, which occupy him about a year in close study, and other topics on which his mind is engaged, next call for a most rigid examination. If his answers are approved, he receives, if at the age of twenty-one, the order of sub-deacon, which enables him to assist in the celebration of mass, to read in the church or chapel, and also to handle the sacred instruments and vessels.

A curious distinction is here made. The sacristan

has to attend to the cleansing of all the sacred vessels, which he can do while they are entire. His assistants cannot clean any one as a whole, except they are in holy orders. The doctrine of the Popish church on this point is, that churches, grounds, vessels, and indeed every thing consecrated, is so as a whole, but that the consecration does not extend to the parts. Thus a merely secular person may touch or clean a consecrated vessel, such as a chalice, in its several pieces, but this person is not allowed to screw the pieces together, because the chalice would then become a whole in his hands! Such is one specimen of this system fraught with quibbling and evasion.

Another year (sometimes a longer space) is employed in further study, when the sub-deacon appears before the bishop, and, if approved, he receives the order of deacon, and, in consequence, he is allowed to preach, and assist in the celebration of the sacraments. Another term is then occupied in the study of theology, and, if approved, he obtains priest's orders, so that he can now celebrate the mass. He is then permitted to drink of the chalice, of which he was never before allowed to partake, and administer all the sacraments of the church, except those of holy orders and confirmation. Prior to his receiving those orders, he passes several days in



a retreat and fasting, and receives the sacrament. He may become a priest at the age of twenty-four ; but he cannot at an earlier time, without a special dispensation being granted by the pope. Every ordained person, it may here be remarked, has power to exercise all the functions of his office, but he has not permission until he receives certain documents, denominated his faculties, from the bishop of the diocese in which he is stationed. And as these must be granted in order to the actual ministration of the individual, so they may be suspended at the will of the prelate. It is held that a man once a priest, is so for time and in eternity, and yet his faculties may be withdrawn for any or the greater portion of his life !

No moment indeed occurs throughout the priest's future career in which he is free from the vow of obedience to superiors, or able to assert not merely his own independence, but that he refers to the authority of God, rather than to the will of man. His bondage is that of the body and the soul for life. Accordingly, he proceeds with the work intrusted to him, until he is compelled to pause. Sometimes he is suddenly recalled to his monastery by the voice of authority. So it was, not long since, with a priest who had for some time been engaged in the service of his church in one

of our eastern counties. On the arrival of the mandate, he was brewing, when he immediately told his servant that she might do what she pleased with the contents of the vat, and taking a hurried leave of a very few of those with whom he had been acquainted, to whom he stated that he should most probably never see them again, he proceeded with the utmost despatch to his monastery in the west of England.

In other instances, the priest continues his labours till unfitted for them by age, and then he retires to his former abode. When, at length, he is supposed to be in dying circumstances, the monks are summoned to his cell, and are employed in prayers for his peaceful departure. When death is thought to be near, the prior anoints him with oil on the eyes, ears, mouth, hands, and feet, which is styled the "sacrament of extreme unction." It is assumed to be founded on the words in the epistle of St. James, ch. v. 14; but the anointing there spoken of was of those expected to recover, while this sacrament, as it is falsely styled, is never given but when the sick person is in his last agony. As soon as his death is announced, every brother has to say seven offices, and every priest to celebrate seven masses "for the repose of his soul." During the remainder of the day of his decease, and

the next night, two of the professed, in their turn, pray over his corpse. On the night before his interment, the coffin is covered with a black pall, placed in the middle of the chapel before the altar, surrounded by wax tapers in large black stands, and the office for the dead is chaunted. On the day appointed for the interment, high mass is celebrated, and a requiem is sung, after which the body is borne to the cemetery of the monastery, while the brotherhood follow in procession, repeating prayers and psalms. At length, the plain wooden coffin, with a black cross on its lid, is lowered into the grave, the funeral service is read, and the procession returns, that the same exercises may be continued. A commemoration, lasting for seven successive days, now takes place; the name of the deceased is placed in the records of the dead; the anniversary of his departure is regularly celebrated; and a plain tablet, surmounted by a cross, is put at the head of the grave.

Such a course of life cannot fail to strike us as very peculiar, inasmuch as, apart from other circumstances, a large number of persons continue unmarried, to engage in the service of the Romish church. The fact is, she imposes celibacy on all her clergy, from the pope to the humblest order of her ministers, on the plea, that a vow to remain unmarried was required in the ancient

church, as a condition of ordination, even from the times of the apostles. But this is opposed to many unquestionable facts. The Scriptures declare that "marriage is honourable in all," Heb. xiii. 4; and Peter, whose successors the popes claim to be, stood in that relation. Paul even describes "forbidding to marry," as a characteristic of the apostasy of after times, 1 Tim. iv. 3. Marriage was not forbidden to bishops in the Eastern church, till the close of the seventh century; nor was it refused to the Western clergy in general, though attempts had been made long before, till the end of the eleventh century. Well had it been if the yoke had never been imposed: the order of God's providence can never be violated—and in this case it is most flagrantly—without great and enormous evils.

As a matter of human policy, the celibacy of the clergy is calculated to promote the interests of the church of Rome. He who sustains the relations of a brother, a husband, a father, a master, a subject, and a member of society at large, has feelings peculiar to such circumstances, and objects in connexion with them which he will desire and labour to promote. In the bosom of the monk, an effort is made to extinguish all such emotions: he cannot marry; and all the ties of family are to be considered as rent asunder for ever.

His church is to be regarded not only as a matter distinct from the state, but as one of infinitely greater moment. He is to prefer the will of his superiors, to that of the community at large, or to the law of the land. He is to live for the system which holds him as in iron bonds. All besides is to be held in contempt, or treated with abhorrence.

Here, then, is power of no ordinary kind : the members of the church of Rome are required to submit themselves to the authority of their priests ; all orders of the clergy, from the sub-deacon to the cardinal, render homage to the pope ; he reigns over the whole hierarchy with resistless power ; and it is only for him to issue his mandate, to summon any or all of this gigantic confederacy to vigorous and persevering exertion. In a word, the monks and nuns are avowedly soldiers of the pope, devoted to his commands, and bound, by stronger than human engagements, to promote his authority over the souls of men, as well as over their bodies. The thought is indeed alarming ; and especially when we consider, that the world is likely yet to feel the might of this anti-christian power, to an extent which hitherto has never been experienced.

One other fact only remains at present to be observed. The priests who had the care of the pagan temples,

and the superintendence of every thing relating to the worship of the gods, were not only a separate order of persons, but possessed important privileges. They were not arrayed in all the terrors of superstition, that are entertained by ignorant savages, but they generally acquired the reputation of great sanctity, and were considered as having a peculiar influence with the powers to whose service they were presumed to be consecrated. Their proper office, which was to do honour to the gods, by presenting sacrifices and offerings, was therefore often associated with the functions of a prophet, and sometimes those of a magistrate. The responses they affected to obtain from oracles, and their pretensions to a knowledge of the future, are alike notorious. How completely these persons were the prototypes of the Roman Catholic priesthood, will be evident on recurring to various parts of this volume. It is manifest, however, that the Romish priest assumes a greater authority, and exercises it with more absolute sway, than the priests of Jupiter and Apollo.

## LETTER XV.

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DOCTRINE OF INTENTION IN CELEBRATING THE SACRAMENT—  
OPPOSITION OF POPERY TO LIBERTY OF JUDGMENT, SCIENCE, AND  
LITERATURE—PERSECUTING SPIRIT OF THE ROMISH CHURCH  
—THE INQUISITION.

ASSUREDLY, the Romanist “labours in the fire, and wearies himself for very vanity.” This will farther appear from a fact not yet stated.

The church of Rome pronounces a curse on any man who shall say, that “there is not required in the ministers who celebrate the sacraments, an intention to do what the church does.” Now, this church not only passes through the outward forms of its sacraments, but means that they should be true sacraments, and should communicate grace to the receivers. Accordingly, it is decreed by the council of Trent, “If any man shall say that the sacraments of the new law do not contain the grace which they signify, or do not confer



grace upon those who do not oppose an obstacle to it, as if they were only external signs of grace or righteousness received by faith, let him be accursed." It has been maintained, that the performance of the external work is enough, without any internal motion; and sacraments are said by the church of Rome to confer grace, by the mere passing through them, because, except the exhibition and application of the sign, no good motion is necessary in the receiver. All that is required is, that no obstacle shall oppose the reception of grace, and the only one considered to be such is mortal sin. But as mortal sins are reduced to a very small number, and even these may be forgiven by the higher authorities, the sacraments are rarely wanting in efficacy, according to this doctrine. Thus, then, they are converted into a kind of magical charm, requiring no exercise of the rational or moral faculties; and, on the showing of the Romanist, would act with equal benefit when the receivers were asleep as when they were awake.

Absurd as is such a notion, it becomes still more so; for the Romanist holds, that while his church means that a sacrament should be true, and communicate grace to the receiver, yet if a priest have not this intention, the form only of a sacrament exists:

the essence is wanting, and therefore it has no validity ; it is a mere sign without the substance. Thus he maintains that baptism is regeneration, but if the intention of the priest be wanting, the subject of the rite is unregenerate ; it is also contended, that in the eucharist the bread and wine are converted into the body and blood of Christ, but if the intention be wanting, the elements continue as they were !

It is not necessary to dwell on the impiety of a doctrine, which subjects the ordinances of Christ to the arbitrary pleasure of even the most wicked men, so that they can render them efficacious, or annul them, as they please. The Scriptures plainly state, that it is the Divine blessing to which such institutions owe their efficacy. The intention of the administrator cannot supply it against the will of God, or withhold it, if he pleases to bestow it. "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure," is the clear and decisive language of Omnipotence. But what are the consequences of the opposite doctrine to the members of the church of Rome ? Assuredly most perplexing and alarming. None can know the intention of their priests ; and, therefore, none can know that they have received the sacraments : and yet a sacrament is said to be "a sacred ceremony, instituted by our Saviour, Jesus Christ,

whereby the merits of his passion are applied to the soul of the worthy receiver." As it is possible, according to their own views, that they have not been baptized, such, in consequence, cannot be saved ! Still further, if an unbaptized person becomes a priest, all that he does is invalid—all the sacraments administered by him, even with a right intention, are empty ceremonies. Should he be a bishop, those he ordains are not priests ; and if he rises to the rank of a pope, the bishops he consecrates have no power. And therefore, by their own teaching, no Romanist, maintaining the doctrine of transubstantiation, can tell whether the elements of the eucharist have been changed or not ; and if they are simply bread and wine, then, in adoring them, he is guilty of idolatry. Thus, according to the doctrine of intention, the church of Rome may be no church, and the pope, with his whole train of subordinates, have no title to the offices they bear. And yet no better position than this is offered for all the services which Popery demands. This doctrine of the power of "intention," evidently is a device to support the authority of the priest, but it goes too far, it annuls that very power. How can any one depend upon the authority of a man, who, after all, may have none whatever, even on his own showing, because there very likely was a want of

“intention” in some one through whom he claims his authority.

The life of a Papist is one of constant sacrifice. The Bible secures to every man the inviolable right of private judgment, in all matters of faith and duty. Not more clearly does it reveal the obligations to obedience to the Divine will, than the right of individual opinion, founded on the principle of personal responsibility. But this the church of Rome denies to all her members. It is stated, that on the question being put to one of them, “What do you believe?” He answered, “What the church believes:” and on being asked, “What does the church believe?” The reply was, “The same as I.” The only question that then remained was, “What do you both believe?” when the answer was, “We both believe alike.” Submission to the ecclesiastical authority which the Romish church sets up, requires the sacrifice of one of the most precious rights of man.

Its opposition to literature is beyond dispute. There is an Index Expurgatorius—a catalogue of books prohibited by the church of Rome. The tenth rule of an Index confirmed by a bull of Clement VIII., in 1595, ordains that no book shall be printed at Rome without the approbation of the pope’s vicar, or some other person delegated by the pope; nor in any other places, unless

allowed by the bishop of the diocese, or some other authorized person. Leo x., chiefly with a view to keep the Scriptures out of the hands of the great mass of the people, prohibited every work translated from the Greek and Hebrew; and forbade the reading of any one book written by Luther or his brother reformers. It is stated in the "History of the Council of Trent," that the Roman inquisitors prohibited every book published by sixty-two different printers; and all books published by any printer whatsoever, who had ever published any one heretical book. Nor let it be thought that such an Index is the work only of a barbarous age; it is still in existence and operation. In the Valais, a Popish canton of Switzerland, amongst a population of 100,000 persons, not one bookseller, and only one printer—a mere creature of the Jesuits—was a few years since to be found. The demand would create a supply, but the Romish church forbids the demand. In other circumstances, the influence of this prohibition appears: an English family, it is said, who inherited a large library, under circumstances which made it a kind of heir-loom, tore out every leaf of the Protestant works, leaving nothing but the covers on the shelves.

When a priest told Inglis, the traveller, that he had thoughts of going to London or Paris, to print two

grammars he had written, he asked him why he did not print them in Madrid, since they were intended for the use of his own countrymen, and could contain nothing political? His answer was, that nothing was so difficult as to obtain a license to publish a book, even though it contained no allusion to politics; and "the better the book," said he, "the more difficult it is to obtain a license, and the more dangerous to publish; because government does not wish to encourage writing, or even thinking upon any subject; and the publication of a good book sets men a thinking." The priest was right, and his testimony corroborates the remark, that Popery flourishes most among the ignorant.

If, however, it can reject the books it disapproves with contumacy and scorn, it does not hesitate to approve, in the name of the Most High and of the heavenly host, of what it considers calculated to promote its interests. Thus the "Life of Veronica of Burasco" was licensed by the "definidor" in Portugal, as inspected and re-inspected by angels, and approved by God! One thing is clear; the assertion of the Divine approval is just as true as that of the inspection of angels.

Philosophy has not escaped the persecution of Popery. As the pope determined that the sun did, or ought to, move round the earth, Galileo was imprisoned for

maintaining the opposite system, which the examination of ages has decided to be true. Still farther : the authors of the Jesuits' edition of Newton, having established the theory of Galileo, confirmed by our own illustrious countryman, proceed, in submission to their church, to usher their volumes into the world, by the declaration that the theory they have established is absolutely false !

Nor can it be doubted, that the sum of human misery accumulated by the Romish system is awfully great. What a conflict must there be in the mind of a young person, at once detesting the monastic life, and yet anxious to gratify the superstitious feelings of a parent ! In other cases we have seen that there must be a fearful amount of endurance. The council of Trent enjoins all bishops to guard against the possible escape of a nun—to employ the secular arm for security. It even calls on sovereigns to assist, and excommunicates all who refuse to obey. Should a monk in this country leave his monastery and marry, his conduct is considered in the highest degree infamous ; but if his wife will separate and become a nun, and he will penitently return, he may be again received. Numbers of monks and nuns in this land, at this hour, groan beneath their iron bondage, and are only held in durance by the fear of



perdition. Even suicide has been preferred to its continuation !

Popery is essentially a persecuting system, as certainly as was that of the false prophet of Mecca. The Rheimish translators of the New Testament, in their note on Revelation xvii. 6, “Drunken with the blood of the saints,” say that “Protestants foolishly expound it of Rome, for that there they put heretics to death, and allow of their punishment in other countries : but their blood is not called the blood of saints, no more than the blood of thieves, man-killers, and other malefactors ; for the shedding of which, by order of justice, no commonwealth shall answer.” What, then, is the inference of the annotators of this English version ? As Protestants and heretics, men may be put to death, like those whose conduct has forfeited their right to live.

There is no difficulty, therefore, in convicting this church of a spirit of persecution even unto death. It plainly appears from many indisputable facts. A pope’s bull, dated from the Vatican, or St. Peter’s Palace at Rome, May 25th, 1643, contains the following passage : —“ And having certain notice, that, in imitation of their godly and worthy ancestors, they” (the Irish) “endeavoured, by force of arms, to deliver their thrall’d nation from the oppression of the heretics, and to extirpate

those workers of iniquity, who had infected the mass of Catholic purity with the pestiferous leaven of their heretical contagion; by virtue of his power of binding and loosing, which God hath conferred upon him, to all and every the aforesaid Christians in the kingdom of Ireland, so long as they should militate against the said heretics and other enemies of the Catholic faith, he did grant a full and plenary indulgence, and absolute remission of all their sins, desiring all of them to be partakers of this precious treasure." Under this indulgence, the Papists of Ireland murdered many thousands of their Protestant neighbours.

One of the sovereigns of France supposed that to persecute Protestantism was to attain the highest distinction; and after revoking the edict of Nantz, A.D. 1689, he was laden with compliments by the Romish clergy, for having, as they said, without violent methods, made the whole kingdom of one opinion. And yet, at that time, five millions of his subjects were either groaning under torture, or flying into exile; turning infidels, if they resolved to retain their property, or, if they sacrificed their fortunes to conscience, chained to the galleys. Their sufferings in thousands of cases being aggravated so as to cause death.

Catherine de Medici invited many illustrious Protest-

ants to Paris, A. D. 1572, to participate in a public festivity, but, in fact, for the horrid slaughter of the Huguenots in France. At midnight, a signal was given to massacre not only all who were found in Paris, but orders were issued that the butchery should extend throughout the kingdom ; in consequence of which, 30,000 persons are calculated to have been slain in the space of thirty days. Nor was this all : crime, aggravated crime, was to be crowned by the hand of devotion ! The pope, attended by his cardinals, went in procession to St. Mark's church, to offer their tribute for " so great a blessing conferred on the see of Rome, and the Christian world ;" thus impiously daring to make the God of righteousness, truth, and love, a party to their fiendish perfidy and cruelty. Medals commemorating " the slaughter of the Huguenots," were struck both at Rome and Paris, many of which are still in existence.

But on persecution in its most appalling forms we cannot dwell. No computation can reach the numbers who, in different ways, have been put to death, for opposing the corruptions of the Romish church. A million of Albigenses, who derived their tenets from the primitive church, but resisted the progress, error, and superstition of the church of Rome, attracted notice in the south of France about the year 1160,

and were massacred by armies sent forth by the decrees of the pope, who gave his blessing, and promised eternal salvation to all who engaged in this work of hell. Nearly a million of true Christians were slain in less than thirty years after the institution of the order of the Jesuits. The Duke of Alva boasted of having put to death in the Netherlands 36,000 Protestants by the hands of the common executioner, during the space of a few years! According to Llorente, the historian of the Spanish Inquisition—a tribunal erected by the popes, for examining and punishing all who were suspected of differing from the church of Rome—the number of its victims, from 1481 to 1808, amounted to 341,021. Of these, 31,912 were burnt; 17,569 burnt in effigy, having died in prison, or not having been secured by the Inquisition; and 291,456 were subjected to severe penances. But the total amount of the victims of the church of Rome will never be known till the “earth shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.”

## LETTER XVI.

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SUPERSTITION ONE RESULT OF ROMANISM—BAPTISM OF BELLS—  
CEREMONIES OF AN ENGLISH MONASTERY—PRETENDED MIRACLES—TENDENCY TO INFIDELITY.

SUPERSTITION is constantly apparent in the church of Rome. In the making of proselytes, for example, its system is treated as a kind of science. One of the first things taught is to make the sign of the cross, by touching with the tip of the forefinger of the right hand, the forehead, the breast, and the shoulders ; but with so doing, there are said to be connected the doctrines of the Trinity, of the advent, sufferings, and death of Christ, and also of human depravity. A variety of other circumstances, as the number of the sacraments, and the manner of attending the mass, are said to be associated with the same truths. The object is, therefore, to secure the making of the sign, because of the doctrines which are said to be figured by it, and

then an impression is left, that the observance of such ceremonies comprehends the whole system. A more ready way of promoting the merest formality, as a matter of essential importance, is utterly inconceivable.

In like manner, the Romanist holds, that the daily repetition of the Breviary is all that is required. A singular illustration of the mere utterance of words is afforded in a bishop's mass. As he can repeat the words of the service more rapidly than they can be sung by the choirs, he may rest on his splendid seat for the season of repose he can thus secure, and this he may be frequently observed as doing.

Another superstition of the Romanists is peculiarly apparent in the baptism of bells. The ceremony of thus blessing of them is supposed to consecrate them to the service of God, to the end that he may give them the power not merely of striking the ear, but of touching the heart! When a bell is to be thus blessed, a procession is made from the vestry, and the officiating priest, having seated himself near the bell, describes to the people the holiness of the act about to be performed, and then sings the Miserere. Next, he blesses some salt and water, and offers a prayer that the bell may acquire the virtue of guarding Christians from the stratagems of Satan, of driving away ghosts, of breaking





that as the smoke of the perfume rises in the bell, and fills it, so a pastor, adorned with the fulness of God's Spirit, receives the perfume of the vows and prayers of the faithful. What an outrage on common sense is such a representation !

That mischief is done to the minds of many by the act of superstition just described, cannot be doubted. A traveller in Italy some years since, observed that it was usual to jingle the church bells whenever there was a thunder storm ; and on inquiring of a peasant the meaning of it, he replied, that it was done to drive away the devil. A bell was exhibited not many years ago, to the Society of Antiquaries, called " the bell of St. Kinnon," of whose sanctity the people of that part of Ireland whence it was brought, thought so highly, that they imagined if an oath taken upon it were broken, it would be followed by instant death. The like superstition prevails also in other countries, and no doubt is a remnant of Popery. The practice, thus injurious, has obviously no authority in the revealed will of God.

The use of bells was common in ancient times in the religious ceremonies of the heathen. The sounding brass was struck in the rites of the god-

dess Syria, and also in those of Hecate ; and was thought to be good for expiation and purification, as well as having some secret influence over the spirits of the departed. The priests of Proserpine at Athens rang a bell to call the people together for sacrifice : a brahmin rings a small one in the ceremonies of the Indian Pooja, and the dancing girls of the pagoda have little golden bells fastened to their feet.

Articles, even inferior to bells, are also consecrated in the church of Rome. O'Croly, once a member of it, says : " Salt is blessed for a variety of purposes ; after being first of all duly exorcised itself," as if evil spirits could make it their abode ! " It is made use of in the administration of baptism, and in the manufacture of holy water. The ceremonial of blessing the oils, *oleum infirmorum*, (oil of the sick,) the *oleum catechumenorum*, (oil of catechumens,) and the *chrisma*, or *chrism*, (consecrated oil used on various occasions,) is complicated beyond measure, and magnificent withal. On Maundy Thursday, the oil is consecrated by the bishop, robed in his pontificals, in the presence of the diocesan clergy robed in their vestments ; who all, at the appointed times, while it is in progress of consecration, worship it by triple genuflexion, salutation, and psalmody. The holy oil is adored on Maundy Thurs-

day, just as the cross is on Good Friday ; on which latter occasion, also, a multiplicity of odd ceremonies takes place.—The efficacy of this benediction lasts but for one year ; at the expiration of which, it is understood that the holy oil becomes unfit to communicate grace, and should be committed for combustion to the devouring element of fire.”

The same spirit of superstition appears in the various services of an English Benedictine monastery. And I prefer to give you the details as practised here, both because I have received the information from a competent witness, and because if Popery is deserving of condemnation, when exhibited in its most disguised and plausible form, I need not say how much worse it must be when it is rampant, and rules over all, from the monarch to the peasant.

On the day of the purification of the Virgin, (February 2nd,) called also Candlemas day, the candles which are required during the whole year are blessed at the altar, lighted, and distributed to all present. At the close of the service, they are either purchased by externs, (persons without,) or are committed to the care of the sacristan.

On Ash Wednesday, ashes prepared from “ blessed palms,” are put on the foreheads of all present as

worshippers, in the form of a cross, when these words are pronounced in Latin, "Remember, O man, that thou art dust, and to dust thou shalt return."

On Palm Sunday, palm branches, or sprigs of willows, are blessed and distributed to each of the worshippers, who, on their knees, receive them from the hand of the officiating priest, in commemoration of Christ's entering Jerusalem.

The offices during three days in the "holy week" are generally chaunted, and are commonly called *tenebræ*, from the Latin word for darkness, when thirteen candles are burnt; one of each is extinguished at a given portion of the office, till the whole are put out, and the chapel is left in comparative gloom. At the end of these offices, a signal is given by the prior, and immediately knocking with the hands and stamping with the feet are commenced, to imitate, it is said, the rending of the rocks and the throes of the earthquake, at the time of the crucifixion of Christ.

On Holy Thursday, the morning salutation at the cell of each of the brethren is changed. It is then, "*Christus factus est pro nobis obediens*—"Christ is made obedient for us:" the answer is, "*Usque ad mortem*"—"Even unto death." No private masses can be celebrated on this day; but high mass is

performed, at which all the priests receive the eucharist merely as communicants, distinguished from the laity by wearing a stole. After high mass, the consecrated host is taken into the sepulchre. This is done in a procession, which includes all the brethren of the house, each one bearing a lighted torch, and singing a hymn in a deep and melancholy tone. They are preceded, as is the case in all processions of the monastery, by a person wearing the white dress, called an alb, having on it a black cross, to which a crucifix is attached.

The sepulchre is a room darkened for the purpose, but, at the same time, highly ornamented with gold and silver vessels. A painting or figure of Christ, as taken from the cross, is seen from a distance lying there, surrounded with moss ; and on it the light of two candles is thrown, while they are completely hidden from view.

On the return of the procession from the sepulchre, the priest, deacon, and sub-deacon strip the altar of all its ornaments, every light is extinguished, the doors of the tabernacle are thrown open, and the chapel rendered in appearance as desolate as possible. The remainder of the day, which is one of fasting and prayer, and the whole of the following night, are employed in watching the sepulchre.

On Good Friday morning, the salutation is, “ *Usque*

*ad mortem*”—“Even unto death;” and the response, “*Mortem autem crucis*”—“The death of the cross.” Now the altar is clothed in black, and of the same hue are the vestments of the priest, deacon, and sub-deacon, prayers of an unusual length and number, far exceeding those of ordinary times, are said; and the cross taken from the top of the tabernacle is laid on the ground for adoration. This act of worship is performed as follows: three cushions are placed at a considerable distance from each other; the worshippers, approaching one by one, kneel on the first cushion, and make a profound obeisance, till the head nearly touches the ground; the same act is repeated at the second cushion, and also at the third; each one then approaches the cross, makes another profound obeisance, and kisses the feet and hands of the crucifix. Such are the practices even in England.

In this act there is another case of gross idolatry, justified by the highest authorities of the Romish church. St. Thomas Aquinas has fully decided, that “the same reverence is to be given to the image of Christ, as to Christ himself; and that since Christ ought to be worshipped with the worship of latria—that is, the highest or Divine degree of worship—his image should receive the same homage.” There are other declarations to the same effect.

In the "Manual of Godly Prayers" is the petition, "O God, which, under the admirable sacrament, hast left unto us the memory of thy passion, grant, we beseech thee, that we may so worship the sacred mysteries of thy body and blood, that continually we may feel in us the fruit of thy redemption." And in the "Office of the Venerable Sacrament," printed at Colen, 1591, are the following words: "O God, who wouldest have the glorious mystery of thy body and blood to remain with us; grant, we pray thee, that we may so worship thy corporeal presence on earth, that we may be worthy to enjoy the vision of it in heaven." Here, again, is the doctrine of merit blending with gross idolatry. Marvellous is that forbearance which delays to take vengeance!

To return to the monastery. In the course of Good Friday, a sermon generally is preached on the crucifixion of Christ: after which, torches are given, and all the brethren and collegians proceed, in silence and in regular order, to the sepulchre. The torches are lighted there, and they return in procession, bearing the host to the chapel, and singing in a tone less melancholy than before. The host is now eaten (it is said to be consumed) by the priest. On this day no mass is celebrated, and the fast, as on Ash Wednesday, is the



most rigid of the Romish church. On Good Friday, great numbers of the laity go to confession, as it is a law of the church, that every member of that body shall receive the sacrament of the eucharist at least once a year, that is, at Easter, or about the time that is in the Easter Indulgence, which begins on Palm Sunday, and ends on Low Sunday, the one following that of Easter.

On Holy Saturday, all the fires in the monastery are extinguished. In the morning, flint, steel, and tinder are placed on a table near the chapel door; here a light is struck, a match is kindled, a candle is lighted by it, the light of the candle is blessed, and from that light all others are obtained: so that in all the various ways in which fire appears in the establishment throughout the year, it is considered as "blessed."

Immediately after, those officiating at the altar, of various orders, enter the chapel, the first bearing a pole ornamented with ribbons, flowers, sprigs of laurel, box, or other evergreens, on which three lighted wax candles are placed in a triangular form, and after proceeding a short distance, he chaunts with a stentorian voice, "*Lumen Christi*,"—"The light of Christ." The whole procession then kneel down, responding, "*Deo Gratias!*"—"Thanks to God!" This is repeated three times, at

each of which the procession kneels. The pole is afterwards placed on the right, or gospel side of the altar, where it continues during the whole of the morning service. The paschal candlestick is also brought in, and the candle lighted ; the professed object of it being to avow a belief in Christ's resurrection. The long litanies, or those of saints, are sung with their responses ; some prophecies which have a reference to the sufferings and triumphs of Christ are also chaunted ; various prayers for the church in all its branches, and for all ranks and degrees of men, are offered ; and, as an exception to every other day, petitions are presented to Heaven in behalf of heretics. Mass is afterwards celebrated, in the course of which the sound of a bell, which has been untouched since Holy Thursday, is again heard ; and at the conclusion of the morning service, which occupies many hours, the monastic inmates retire from the chapel in the same order in which they entered, and preparations are immediately commenced for celebrating the feast of Easter. On the continent, the ceremonies on this occasion partake still more of the puppet show, the crucifixion and resurrection being often represented by groups of wooden or waxen dolls.

Easter Sunday is considered by the Romish church the greatest festival of the year. In the morning, the

salutation at each cell-door is,—“*Surrexit Dominus vere, hallelujah!*” “The Lord has risen indeed, hallelujah!” and the response, “*Deo gratias! hallelujah!*”—“Thanks to God! hallelujah!” Now the gloom of Lent is over, and a good breakfast is enjoyed. Again the crucifix is seen on the tabernacle, the veil which has previously hidden it being removed; the altar has on its best covering; the priest, with his assistants, are attired in their richest and most splendid robes. High mass is celebrated, the music of which is of a far more lively order than has been heard for several weeks, and all the services of the day are characterized by joy and exultation.

A great high mass is celebrated on Ascension day, to commemorate the entrance of Christ on his mediatorial glory. After the singing of the Gospel, the paschal candlestick, which, for the forty days after Easter, had stood on the Gospel side of the altar, representing, it is said, the risen Saviour, is removed to the sacristy.

On Pentecost Sunday, there is a grand high mass, in commemoration of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

On Corpus Christi, and for eight successive days, there are processions in many places, in which the consecrated host is carried round the premises. On the

continent, it is borne through the streets. While these days are elapsing, complin and the benediction are always chaunted.

On the first of November, a great high mass is celebrated to thank God on behalf of all the saints in heaven. This is said to be "a feast of the universal church;" and in the evening a high office is chaunted for "the repose of the souls of the faithful in purgatory." On the following day, another high mass is performed, when a requiem is sung for the same purpose, and a private mass is said by all the priests at a private altar. On the twenty-second day of the same month is the feast of St. Cecilia, "a virgin and a martyr," who is the patroness of all singers. All those engaged in the choirs indulge themselves freely.

On Christmas day, there is high mass at midnight; all the vestments worn are splendid, and the altars highly ornamented. On this day, which is an exception to any other in the year, each priest is required to celebrate three masses. Another high mass is passed through in the forenoon.

All that has been stated, so far as it regards the general circumstances of the monastery—its structure, feasts, fasts, penances, and spirit, will also apply to the convents of England, the residence of

nuns, instead of monks, who, while the latter remain only until prepared for the service of the mission, continue within the walls of their respective establishments for life. In every part of these services gross superstition is apparent; and to suppose that they can be acceptable to God, exhibits delusion almost incredible. Yet such is the awful infatuation of multitudes.

No where can we look in popish lands without its being more openly apparent. The matadores, or bull-fighters of Spain, for instance, rise from the dregs of the people, and like most of their equals, they unite superstition and profligacy of character. None of them will venture on the arena without a scapulary, two small pieces of cloth, suspended by ribbons on the breast and back, between the shirt and waistcoat. In the front square there is a print on linen of the Virgin Mary, the representation generally called the Carmel Mary, who is the patron goddess of all the rogues and vagabonds in Spain. These scapularies are blessed and sold by the Carmelite friars. A celebrated matador, besides the usual amulet—the scapulary—trusted for safety to the patronage of St. Joseph, whose chapel adjoins the amphitheatre at Seville. During the life of this man, Pepe Illo, its doors were thrown open as long as the fight continued, the image of the saint being all the time encircled by a

great number of lighted wax candles, which the gladiator provided at his own expense. The saint, however, allowed him often to be wounded, and finally left him to meet his death in a bull-fight at Madrid.

At Rome, after Christmas, there is an exhibition, called the *Prosepio*, to be seen in almost every church, and in most of the private houses of Rome; but it is especially splendid in the church of Santa Maria in Ara Cœli, which crowns the loftiest summit of the Capitoline hill—sometimes crowded almost to suffocation, by peasants from remote mountain villages, arrayed in grotesque and holiday costumes, to see the Virgin and the Bambino, the new-born Jesus. This, it is said, was originally brought down from heaven one night by an angel. The upper part of the church, around the great altar, is adorned with painted scenes; and in the front of a stage, sits the figure of the Virgin, made of wood, attired in a blue satin gown, and a topaz necklace. Near her lies the Bambino, wrapped in rich swaddling clothes, and decked with a gilt crown: beside him stand Joseph and the two Marys; and at a distance are two martial figures, made of pasteboard, and mounted on white horses, and called Roman centurions. Near them projects the head of a cow. All these figures are as large as life. To the Bambino

miraculous powers are attributed ; and when people are in the extremity of sickness, it is sent for, and visits them in a coach, attended by one of the friars. “ I suppose,” says a traveller, “ no physician in Rome has such practice, or such fees. One of our Italian servants assured me it had cured her of a fever, when all the doctors had given her up ; and I firmly believe it did, for upon inquiry I found, that the doctors resigning her to the care of the Bambino, discontinued their visits and their medicines. The *six* blisters they had put on were allowed to be taken off ; she got neither wine nor broth, and drank nothing but pure water to relieve her thirst. After hearing this account, I was no longer surprised at the Bambino’s well-earned reputation for curing diseases.”

But, were the Romish church to be believed, miracles are still of frequent occurrence. The image of Loretto is declared to have been transported over immense tracts of land and vast oceans ; and another, with one of the child, placed in a church at Lucca, is said to be equally remarkable. The story is, that an infidel threw a stone at the infant, but the Virgin shifted him for defence from one arm to the other, and received the blow on her shoulder, whence the blood issued, which is preserved in a bottle, and shown with



the greatest ceremony by the priest in his vestments, with lighted tapers, while all embrace the relic on their knees. It is, of course, a very inconsiderable addition that the sceptic was swallowed up; the hole, enclosed by a grate, is shown just before the altar of the image. Aringhus says, "The images of the blessed Virgin shine out continually by new and daily miracles, to the joy of their votaries, and the confusion of their opponents." When the French entered Rome, in 1796, more than twenty pictures of the Virgin Mary were said to have moved their eyes, and even to have shed tears. Affidavits by many persons who thought they saw these miracles, or at least, said that they did so, were published, with engravings of the pictures. A translation of this work into English was published under the authority of the Popish bishops, but the fiction was too gross to be believed then in England, and the work was rigorously suppressed.

Allusion has already been made to the lives of two saints, very lately published. Of St. Alphonsus Liquori, born at Marianello, near Naples, in the year 1696, it is said :—

"His loving patroness, our blessed Lady, rewarded his zeal in the cause of charity, by appearing to him in the sight of an immense crowd of people, collected in

the church of Foggia. From her countenance a ray of light, like that of the sun, was reflected upon the face of her devout servant, which was seen by all the people, who cried out, 'A miracle! a miracle!' Alphonsus, in his juridical attestation, deposed, that he, together with the assembled audience, saw the countenance of the blessed Virgin, resembling that of a girl of fourteen or fifteen years of age, who turned from side to side, as was witnessed by every one present.

"God rewarded his zeal by several prodigies; for, one day, during a mission at Amalfi, a person going to confession at the house where Alphonsus lived, found him there at the very time for beginning the sermon in the church. After he had finished his confession, he went straight to the church, and to his surprise found Alphonsus some way advanced in his sermon.

"Whilst he was preaching on the patronage of the blessed Virgin, he suddenly exclaimed, 'Oh, you are too cold in praying to our blessed Lady! I will pray to her for you!' He knelt down in the attitude of prayer, with his eyes raised to heaven, and was seen by all present lifted more than a foot from the ground, and turned towards a statue of the blessed Virgin near the pulpit. The countenance of our Lady darted forth beams of light which shone upon the face of the extatic Alphon-

sus. This spectacle lasted about five or six minutes, during which the people cried out, 'Mercy! mercy! a miracle!' "

St. Francis De Girolamo, the second on the list, was born near Taranto, in the kingdom of Naples, December 17, 1642. His early childhood is represented as adorned by a peculiar tenderness of heart, and to relieve distresses was to him the most surpassing delight. "How pleasing to God," says his biographer, "was his liberality, an extraordinary prodigy once manifested. One day his mother caught him, so to speak, in a pious theft, in the act of carrying away, to distribute among the poor, some bread belonging to the household. The matron chid him for his indiscretion, as their circumstances could ill afford a charity so unrestrained, and forbade him to do so any more. The boy answered with a blushing cheek, but an air of superiority, 'Look to the cupboard!' whereupon she looked as he desired, and lo, not a loaf was missing!—His frequent ravishment from the earth, and suspension in air, was a well known occurrence, visible to many who beheld him at mass, and, in a remarkable manner, happened during a procession. Nor was that singular prerogative denied him, which God's saints have sometimes possessed, of appearing in two places

at once, or of passing with the velocity of blessed spirits from one to another.

“Neither were the secrets of hearts hidden from him. A very remarkable instance of his prophetic veracity occurred in the case of three young men, to whom, in his own house, he foretold their future destinies.

“Even the elements obeyed him. Rain ceased at his command. All nature was obedient and subservient to him. The air bore to him on its wings his stick, which he had left behind him ; and the herbs grew supernaturally to minister to his charity.”

Such is the blasphemy of Popery as it is. The very attributes of Deity are ascribed to the men who have lately been canonized ! But on this gross impiety it is not necessary to enlarge. In reference to miracles generally, it should be remembered, that they were evidences of Divine revelation, and that they ceased when revelation was complete. Were there about to be some addition to the word of God, we might expect their return ; but as none will ever be made, assuredly no miracles will arise. As to the pretences of Popery, some are profane and impious in a shocking degree, but others are so absurd and ridiculous, as to carry their confutation in their face. Not a few of them have been clearly proved to be impositions, and even these

destroy all credit for the rest; for he who has been repeatedly proved to be guilty of falsehood, can never be believed.

It is not to be disputed, that there have been, and still are, persons of true piety in the Romish church. But if some are sincere, though their worship is in the highest degree superstitious, others are the mere slaves of erroneous opinions and unwarrantable practices. Take, in proof of this, the following quotation from Ranke's History of the Popes, in reference to the time of Leo x.:—

“ The schools of philosophy were divided as to whether the soul was really immaterial and immortal, but one diffused through all mankind, or whether it was merely mortal. The most distinguished philosopher of that day, Pietro Pomponazzo, declared himself the champion of the latter opinion. He compared himself to Prometheus, whose vitals were preyed upon by a vulture for having stolen fire from heaven; but with all his painful toil, with all his acuteness, he arrived at no other result than this,—‘ That when the legislator decreed that the soul was immortal, he had done so without troubling himself about the truth.’ It must not be supposed that these opinions were confined to a few or held in secret; Erasmus expresses his astonishment at the blasphemies he heard. An attempt was made

to prove to him, a foreigner, out of Pliny, that there was no difference between the souls of men and of beasts. —While the common people sank into an almost pagan superstition, and looked for salvation to mere ceremonial practices, the opinions of the upper classes were of an anti-religious tendency.

“How astonished was the youthful Luther when he visited Italy. At the very moment that the offering of the mass was finished, the priests uttered words of blasphemy which denied its efficacy. It was the tone of good society in Rome to question the evidences of Christianity. ‘No one passed,’ says P. Ant. Bandino, ‘for an accomplished man who did not entertain heretical opinions about Christianity; at the court the ordinances of the Catholic church and passages of holy writ were spoken of only in a jesting manner; the mysteries of the faith were despised.’”

“Among my numerous acquaintance in the Spanish clergy,” says another modern writer, “I have never met with any one possessed of bold talents, who has not, sooner or later, changed from the most sincere piety to a state of unbelief.” I should not use the phrase as he does about “the most sincere piety,” for I should deny that it ever existed in such cases; but I quote his words in proof of the tendency of the Romish system to abject infidelity. Other evidence of the same kind appears in a



letter written by Colonel Guiseppe Tordo to the Rev. Frate Lettore, Guiseppe de Catania, preacher of the order of St. Francis at Matta, to explain and justify his conversion to Protestantism, from which I take only a few extracts. “ I *saw*—but to what purpose shall I enumerate the turpitude, the atrocities, the iniquity which I saw claiming affiance with sacrilegious Rome ? in one word, I saw enough to make me an *atheist*. Yes, sir, I became an *atheist* ; tremendous confession ! but I could wish it were heard by all the devotees of Rome. Yes, Sir, I say an atheist, the melancholy but natural consequence of the religion of Rome.

“ I became an atheist, because I could not imagine that there existed a God, whose religion was destined to be the scourge of the human race, the herald of tyranny, the advocate of ignorance, superstition, and error ; would prohibit the reading of the sacred oracles, as they emanated from the hands of their author ; would canonize the regicide, trample upon the sacredness of an oath, burst the bands of civil society, plunge into misery the nations unhappy enough to adopt it, and render desolate the fairest of regions.”

Need I add a word, my children, to these melancholy statements ? Infidelity and Superstition are the twin children of the Church of Rome. What an argument is here for having a right understanding of the character and



tendency of its doctrines, as a security to yourselves, and as an inducement to compassion for others! Receive, then, the truth in the love of it, and “contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.” In advances now making towards Popery, Romanists rejoice; but at all which tends to purify Protestantism, they tremble. They hate the declaration, “The Bible, and the Bible only, is our religion,” and they dread the progress of such a principle. They are indisposed to collision, even with a man of humble powers, but sterling sense, whose simple and final appeal is to the word of God, while they delight to lead astray the ignorant and uninstructed. On this ground they know he must triumph, and hence their common resort to any or every other.

That Truth is great and all-prevailing, papists shall yet assuredly prove. The prophet Isaiah has clearly pointed out the instrumentality by which the reign of Christ shall be introduced and maintained. “He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.” “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord,” Isa. xi. 4, 9. St. Paul, also, when foretelling the overthrow of the man of sin, expressly says,—“The Lord shall consume the wicked one with the

spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy him with the brightness of his coming."

Obstacles to the progress of truth still operate, and fearful collisions and convulsions may be expected yet to arise. Satan will task his utmost powers, as he knows his time is short, and Antichrist, combining all existing elements that are opposed to the will of God, will yet rage; but its season of intolerance shall be short: though the heat may be scorching, it will resemble the fitful brightening of the embers just before they expire. And glorious will be the day when the most consummate scheme that ever opposed the interests of man and the honour of God, shall meet the doom denounced by Him who cannot lie. "Rejoice over her," it will be said, "thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets, for God hath avenged you on her;" while to this there will be the response, "Babylon the great is fallen—is fallen!" The stone cast by an angel's hand into the depths of the sea, is at once an emblem of its fall, and the pledge that its ruin is complete and eternal. I will close with the words of the apostle, "Therefore, my beloved, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."

THE END.



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